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ABSTRACT

Designed for youth workers, teachers, counselors, and student organizers, 11 essays in this handbook examine issues concerned with children's rights. "Children's Rights and Social Work" proposes that social workers can speed and direct the process of change by advocating the rights of young people and by providing services to make those rights a reality. The cartoon, "The Invention of Childhood," suggests that our conceptions of children are shaped by our culture. "A Look At Children's Oppression and Some Suggestions for Change" examines discrimination in the legal system, the family, and the schools. "Changing Childhood" analyzes the isolation of modern middle-class children from active participation in community life. Other essays discuss the weaknesses of alternative youth service agencies, refute arguments that adults use to prevent youth from participating in the political processes, analyze the "myths" of childhood, and describe Youth Liberation of Ann Arbor, the first children's organization run by children. A guide for teachers and workshop leaders provides synopses of handbooks of the Youth Liberation Press accompanied by lesson plans. Titles include "Young People and the Law," "Growing Up Gay," "High School Women's Liberation," and "Student and Youth Organizing." A list of advocacy organizations and an annotated bibliography conclude the handbook. (Author/KC)

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Children's Rights Handbook

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For Teachers, Youth Workers and Student Organizers

SP 011 715

Contents

INTRODUCTION

As you read this book you will almost certainly find ideas that you disagree with or have never considered before. That's only natural since the concept of young people's liberation is a new one to most people. A major purpose of this book is simply consciousness-raising — introducing readers to the idea of children's rights and hopefully sparking a continuing interest in the subject.

A second purpose is to encourage further investigation into children's rights so that interested readers can become equipped to present workshops on the topic. That's explained more fully on page 4.

Statistics on Children and Youth 5

A sheet of statistics is never sufficient information to define a complex problem or situation, but it can be helpful in identifying trouble spots and trends. The more we know about the nature and extent of the problems we face the more capable we are of devising appropriate and workable solutions.

Children's Rights and Social Work 6

Social workers have always been concerned for the welfare of children, and recently that concern has taken the form of seeking new and expanded social welfare programs. Despite good intentions, however, the programs developed by social workers have not always worked to the greatest benefit of children. The author proposes that, "organized social work may be of more help to children by shifting emphasis from expansion of services to extension of children's rights." In order to bring about such a change society's opinion of children as immature and incapable of exercising good judgment will have to change. Perhaps we will learn that much "immature" behavior in young people is actually a result of the low expectations that adults have for them. Social workers (and indeed, any adults who work with young people) can help speed and direct the process of change by advocating for the rights of young people and by working to provide the services necessary to make those rights a workable reality.

The Invention of Childhood 11

"Childhood is not as natural as you might think. In many ways it is a social creation, developed to produce and process the kinds of people that society wants," begins this cartoon history of childhood through the ages. In earlier historical periods children were viewed much differently than they are today. That suggests our conceptions of children and their capabilities are shaped by our culture and are not determined purely by physical or developmental factors.*

A Look at Children's Oppression, and Some Suggestions for Change 15

Young people **are** oppressed, writes the author, and he sets out to show the many forms that oppression takes. People who say that there's nothing wrong with the way children are

* The three comic strips in this book are reprinted by permission from the **New Internationalist**, No. 66. Copyright © 1978, **New Internationalist**. The **New Internationalist** is an excellent British monthly which each month focuses on a world problem related to the struggle for development. For subscription information write to the New Internationalist, 113 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11201.

treated in our society may be surprised to find that there are close parallels between the discrimination faced by black people and women and that endured by children. Not surprisingly, the rationales devised to justify children's oppression sound much like the arguments used not long ago by racists and male chauvinists.

Discrimination in the legal system, in families and in the schools is examined, and positive suggestions for change are put forth. Finally, the social and political forces that help shape a society in which young people are oppressed are briefly discussed.

Changing Childhood **28**

The second comic from **The New Internationalist** looks at the role of young people in their communities, and especially at the isolation of modern middle-class children from active participation in community life. It suggests that in order to change childhood children need to be exposed to adult life and experience rather than set conveniently apart.

Where Goeth Thou, Alternative Youth Services? **30**

A veteran alternative youth worker asks some hard questions about the future of so-called alternative youth work. He is disturbed by the increasing tendency of alternative youth service agencies to function more and more like traditional ones. Seven points which make for humanistic and effective youth service work are discussed.

Someone Ought to Find a Better Way to Help Kids **32**

Another experienced youth worker suggests that most youth service agencies, be they traditional or alternative, are failing to provide needed help and necessary skills and information to young people. The author feels that the stress on service (and subsequent neglect of organizing) has been perpetuated so that adults can maintain control over young people. If instead adults devoted money and energy to **organizing** young people to defend their own interests they could probably do a lot more good, but this writer believes adults are afraid of the possible consequences if young people are trained to be their own advocates. Perhaps young people would realize that many of the agencies set up supposedly to serve them are really best serving the interests of the adults who run them.

Should Young People Have Political Rights **35**

Children running for political office? Holding positions on school board?! "Preposterous," say many people, but this article attempts to refute some of the arguments adults often use to rationalize preventing young people from participating in our 'democratic' society.

The Myth of Childhood **37**

Is childhood the happiest time of one's life? Should children be carefully protected from the 'evils' of the adult world to maintain their innocence and carefree natures? Does the sentimentality that adults often show towards children block meaningful interaction? All of these questions and more are raised in this provocative comic strip.

The Case for Child Advocacy **41**

Professionals can do a great deal to help young people gain more rights and have better relationships with adults in families, schools, and other institutions. Unfortunately, little research has been done to help guide professionals in the area of child advocacy. This writer has surveyed the available literature and briefly presents a case for being a child advocate. Hopefully, as social workers and other adults who work with young people raise their consciousness on children's rights, many more studies will be done documenting the problems children face and methods that have been

successful in alleviating them.

Adult Support Made a Difference 46

When Youth Liberation of Ann Arbor was founded in 1970 it was the only children's rights organization in the country that was run by children themselves. The organization grew and prospered during the 1970s, and at times had hundreds of Ann Arbor young people working together to expand their rights. Naturally it was young people themselves who were the life and substance of the organization. But adults also played an important role. That is described here so that adults today may learn a few of the many ways they can lend support to the children's rights movement.

A Guide for Teachers and Workshop Leaders 51

Youth Liberation Press publishes a series of handbooks on different aspects of children's rights. The major ones are summarized here and lesson plans are provided which may be used in classrooms, training workshops, student study groups and any place else where public presentation and discussion of children's rights is appropriate.

Advocacy Organizations 60

Would you like more information about children's rights, youth advocacy and related topics? We hope you will after reading this book. In this section are listed several national organizations that provide information and training in youth advocacy.

Bibliography 62

Youth workers, teachers, counselors, and student organizers all need to be well-informed on the issues of young people's rights. The books described in this annotated bibliography are some of the best and most essential sources available.

They're All Alike 65

The old (un)truisms about black people and women are uncannily similar to those that are still believed and repeated about young people. You might want to read this page first. It's guaranteed to start some ideas flowing. The sayings are most effective when read aloud.

The Workshop and Presentation Kit

The **Children's Rights Handbook** can be purchased separately or as part of the **Workshop and Presentation Kit**. If purchased separately the **Handbook** is an excellent educational resource for those interested in a brief introduction to children's rights. Those who read it are sure to think more deeply about how young people should be treated and how we can adjust our society so that young people can play a larger role in it. Upon completing the book the casual reader may feel she knows a good deal more about children's rights than when she started and be satisfied.

Other readers, however, may want to explore the topic further. They may feel that the **Handbook** raises more questions than it answers. Particularly, those who work with young people may desire more information so that they can clarify their thoughts and begin to develop real-world applications of some of the ideals discussed here.

In order to help people in that position we have created a complete kit of materials, with workshops, lesson plans, and suggestions for visual presentations and handouts. The **Children's Rights Handbook** is the introductory book to the Kit. The complete Kit comes with four other Youth Liberation books of your choice (see pgs. 51-59). Staff members of Youth Liberation Press are also available to present the material in person if desired. Please write or call Youth Liberation for complete information on the Kit and related presentations.

If Children Were Numbers...

There are a lot of people under 18 in the United States, and they all face some discrimination because of their age. Many of them also face other kinds of discrimination, for reasons such as their race, sex, economic background, language, or parent's marital status. These figures give a glimpse into the situation and composition of American young people. They are taken from **America's Children 1976**, by the National Council of Organizations on Children and Youth, and **Children's Liberation**, David Gottleib, editor.

- There are 66 million people under age 18 in U.S., (1/3 of the population).
- 13% of them are black, 6% Spanish Origin, 1% Indian and other minorities, and 80% white.
- Most of them between 6 and 16 are in school, but 2-3 million are "pushouts."
- 15,000 die each year from accidents, abuse, and suicide (suicide is the leading cause of death in some age groups).
- Many do not live past their 1st year (U.S. infant mortality ranks 8th in the world for whites, 31st for non-whites).
- 25% (17 million) young people live in poverty, and there were more young people below the official poverty line in 1976 than there were in 1970.
- Only 8 million poor young people live in families aided by public assistance.
- Young people are the poorest age group in the country (as determined by their **parents'** income). There are a higher percentage of young people in poverty than any other age group except the elderly.
- Non-white young people are much more likely to be poor than white young people are. In 1974 41% of black young people lived below the official poverty line; only 13% of white young people did. The proportion of black young people in poverty declined in the 1960s, but almost no progress has been made in the 1970s.
- 51.5% of young people in families headed by a woman are poor; only 8.7% of young people in families headed by a man are poor (9 million young people live with mothers).
- 70% of young people living in families with incomes below $5,000 have no hospital insurance; 30% of young people living in families with incomes between $5,000 and $10,000 have no hospital insurance.
- 28% of teenagers are problem drinkers.
- Child abuse estimates vary, but it can safely be estimated that 1,000,000 young people are abused each year.
- More than 600,000 young people are born each year to teenage mothers.
- Nearly 18 million young people ages 6-14 have working mothers, and need some form of day care after school; 6 million young people under 6 years of age have working mothers, and need day care.
- Approximately 1,000,000 young people try to run away from home each year.

Though this is only a brief statistical look at the situation of young people, two things should be clear: 1) There are a lot of people under 18, and their problems are similarly large and, 2) though all young people are damaged by ageism, young people face many other forms of discrimination related to other factors, such as race, class, and sex, which compound and make more acute the discrimination based on age.

by Marvin Silverman

Children's Rights and Social Work

Social work has a long and well-established tradition of concern for the welfare of children. In recent years particularly, that concern has taken the form of seeking new and expanded social welfare programs for children and families. This article is a departure from that course, in that it proposes that organized social work may be of more help to children by shifting emphasis from expansion of services to extension of children's rights. To consider the idea of children having rights or even needing them involves a substantial alteration in frame of reference. By virtue of their immaturity, inexperience, and lack of sound judgment, children have been considered unable to act in their own best interests, thus requiring the supervision and control of adults. This responsibility has traditionally rested upon parents, but when parents are incapable or uncaring, the state has reserved the right intervene on behalf of the neglected or mistreated child. Over the years, government has come to have an increasingly broad perspective of what it considers the best interests of the child, resulting in a continuing controversy between the state and parents. Should the state, for example, have the power to provide sex education to children over the objection of parents? Should there be corporal punishment in schools when parents are opposed? In spite of the struggles, however, the right of benevolent and disinterested state intervention in the behalf of children has become firmly established and forms one of the basic tenets of the American child welfare system.

Emphasis on children's rights as opposed to state or parental rights is a relatively new development. There have always been legal prohibitions against doing certain things to children, for example, laws against assault, cruelty, and deprivation. Within the past fifty years or so, children's charters have been suggested; and various groups have declared the right of children to such benefits as adequate housing, nutrition, income maintenance, and effective parenting. But there are growing numbers of people who have a more vigorous point of view on children's rights, in the sense of children having increased rights to make significant decisions for themselves. Richard Farson has put the issue succintly: "Child advocates now fall into two obviously related groups whose goals both overlap and conflict: on the one hand there are those who are interested in protecting children, and on the other those who are interested in protecting children's rights."

There are very few important steps a person under the age of eighteen can take legally without the consent of parents or other adult authority. In practice, many youngsters do manage to exercise some direction over their lives, but the degree of autonomy they have is usually a function of just how much freedom their parents are willing to grant. Some children exercise considerable autonomy without parental approval, because their parents are reluctant to declare them incorrigible and risk losing custody of them to the court. On the other hand, there are many parents who would like their children to have greater self-direction but are inhibited by legal restrictions. The law and social institutions make few distinctions among children of different ages. The 14-year-old is subject to the same degree of parental authority as the child of four. The 15-year-old has no more choice over her education than she has in voting

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for public officials. There is also little distinction between areas in which the child has direct and immediate experience, such as choice of friends and style of dress, in contrast to other areas requiring a more indirect and abstract experience, such as signing contracts.

BEARING THE BURDEN OF INCOMPETENCY

These difficult but significant distinctions are avoided by placing children in a specific class of incompetents. It is a status that has been shared by diverse groups including American Indians, mental patients, and to a lesser extent women. For each of these groups constitutional rights were limited not to protect society, but because of the presumed inability of the occupants of the class to act in their own best interests. The special "protections" of being a member of a group of incompetents, however, have proved to be a very mixed blessing. While the intent of these policies may have been well-meaning, their effect has often proved to be oppressive and damaging. Deprived of constitutional rights, the mentally ill accused of crimes would frequently have longer periods of confinement in mental hospitals than "normal" criminals in prisons. In an analysis of data supplied by the Children's Bureau Paul Lerman noted a similar situation prevailing with children. He found that 26 percent of all children convicted of status crimes (behavior which is legal for an adult but criminal for a child) were placed or committed, compared with a commitment rate of 23 percent of adults convicted of major crimes (homicide, rape, armed robbery, assault, burglary, grand theft) and an 18 percent commitment rate for adults convicted of minor crimes. The Supreme Court, in its famous 1967 *Gault* decision, required legal safeguards and due process in children's court proceedings, but children can still be prosecuted and committed for a large variety of acts which are entirely legal for adults.

"Since the question of incompetence lies at the root of the issue of children's rights, it is important to raise the question of whether anyone really knows just what the competencies of children are at various ages."

Since the question of incompetence lies at the root of the issue of children's rights, it is important to raise the question of whether anyone really knows just what the competencies of children are at various ages. We do know that beliefs about children's abilities are strongly influenced by culture, and if one reviews the history of childhood or even contemporaneous views of children, a wide divergence of viewpoints become apparent. In Philippe Aries' classic study *Centuries of Childhood*, he found that, in Europe in the middle ages, even the *idea* of childhood and adolescence did not exist. Children were viewed as smaller versions of older people and were naturally accepted into the life of the community. In Tibet prior to the Chinese invasion, there were children who studied advanced religion and metaphysics, while Margaret Mead has reported a full spectrum of socially approved sexual activities of the children in Polynesia. It is not even necessary to reach back into history or more exotic cultures for examples of extreme diversity. A 15-year-old in West Germany today can walk into a tavern and drink a glass of ale while her Danish peer can leave school with impunity. By our American standards, both of these behaviors would be considered delinquent.

Furthermore, we know that social expectations, particularly when they are pervasive and long-standing, are an extremely powerful force in shaping human behavior. People tend to see themselves the way other people see them, and they tend to behave in a way that is expected of them. Using the mass media as an example, it is revealing to observe the role of women in some of the older films. In most instances they are yielding, dependent, helpless or hysterical in a crisis, and deferential to the powerful male hero, just as children today are presented as somewhat mischievous but essentially content with the wise decisions made for them by adults. Movies, of course, are only one element in a complex of social expectations held by the larger society which seems to view children as a highly valued resource for the future but incapable of

exercising any genuine responsibility until they are grown. It is no more possible to judge the total impact of this role-modeling process on children today than to evaluate its impact on women just a few years ago. But it certainly must be clear that role messages which expect dependency, irresponsibility and lack of judgment act as self-fulfilling prophecies, tending to evoke the very behavior and attitudes they predict.

HOME—AN ARMED TRUCE

It is expected that youngsters should continue living with their parents until their late teens, and any significant departure from this norm is often viewed as reflecting an emotional or family problem. But is there any solid evidence that, for example, a 15-year-old who prefers living with a group of her peers to living with her parents is disturbed? Is it sick for a 16-year-old to want her own private living space? Consider the increasingly common situation in which a child and her parents can't get along and the conflict reaches the point where it is unbearable for the child and perhaps the parents as well. Therapy has been attempted but without noticeable change. There are no receptive relatives waiting in the wings, and in any case, painful as the situation is, the parents are reluctant to release the child and acknowledge their "failure." What happens? The child may try somehow to endure and develop the devices and mechanisms that enable her to continue to live at home with a minimum of pain until she can legally leave. *Home life becomes an armed truce* with parents gritting their teeth, struggling to live with their child until she reaches majority and they can release her with a clear conscience, their parental duty accomplished. Perhaps the child may behave so badly and get in so much trouble that she provokes placement outside the home, either because her parents declare her incorrigible or because of a pattern of criminal activities. Whether this behavior is impulsive or a controlled maneuver to instigate removal from the home, the child inevitably becomes labeled disturbed or delinquent. The social labeling is typically accompanied by self-labeling, so that the behavior necessary to leave home requires either the initiation or aggravation of negative identity formation. Another alternative, one that is reaching epidemic proportions, is to run away. Dependable data are hard to come by, but the annual number of runaways appears to be in the millions. The youngster literally becomes a fugitive from the law. She is beyond the pale and can expect little help from organized society. In fact she must take pains to keep clear of established social agencies out of fear that they will initiate action to have her returned home or sent to an institution. Thus the child is without resources, open to exploitation, and frequently must turn to crime or prostitution just in order to survive.

"It certainly must be clear that role messages which expect dependency, irresponsibility, and lack of judgment act as self-fulfilling prophecies, tending to evoke the behavior and attitudes they predict."

Consider the possibility of children, particularly teenagers, having the right to choose where they want to live. They could, for example, live with other families or with adult friends who were agreeable. If they were from families on AFDC, a portion of the grant as well as food stamps could go directly to them so they could manage their own subsistence. Children from more affluent families could receive money directly from their parents. There also could be partially subsidized low-rent apartment houses for teenagers, with a social worker as resident manager available for help if needed and wanted. Although the majority of children would probably continue to live at home with their parents, if such alternatives were to develop they would be of critical importance for those youngsters who cannot live with their parents.

FAILURE—A PROBLEM OF KIDS, SCHOOLS, OR THE SYSTEM?

The evolution of a school system through

which education is universally available to all children has been a major accomplishment. Whether it is wise for schooling to be compulsory, however, is another matter. In most states, children must remain in school until their late teens and follow more or less similar academic programs regardless of interest or motivation. The basic premise is that the child should go to school and should do well. There are no acceptable alternatives for the child who cannot adapt to school, and there is no graceful way to leave school other than by graduation. Whether the student drops out or is expelled, it is a social disgrace that carries with it serious economic, social, and psychological consequences. As a result, the efforts of school social workers, guidance counselors, psychologists, and helpers in mental health clinics and other agencies have usually been directed solely toward assisting the child to remain in school — to adjust to the system. To many professionals, school failure, either academic or behavioral, is perceived as originating in a psychological defect of the child. Others see the problem as usually originating in an unresponsive school system, but even here the fundamental assumption is that school is inherently beneficial and the challenge is to find the right teachers, the most appropriate teaching methods, the most sensitive administrators, or an optimally effective network of relationships among school, home, and community.

"A 15-year-old in West Germany today can walk into a tavern and drink a glass of beer, while his Danish agemate can leave school. By our American standards, both of these behaviors would be considered delinquent."

But is it unreasonable to consider that there are large numbers of children who basically do not like school, cannot stand the confinement and simply are not interested in learning what schools have to teach? This is not to say that emotional problems cannot interfere with learning, but, rather, it is to question the assumption that failure of adaption to school is in itself indicative of a psychological defect in the child or even a systemic detect within the school.

What happens to these children now? Most accept school as an unpleasant fact of life, spend agonizing years of boredom there, and muddle through waiting for it to end. Some children rebel and in the process are labeled and subjected to a variety of therapies and special services. Corporal punishment is widely used; it is now sanctioned in the school systems of forty-seven states. Medication is a more recent innovation for difficult youngsters; one recent estimate is that there are now over 1 million schoolchildren taking psychoactive drugs prescribed by physicians. Those problem students in turn make life unhappy for their peers who are truly interested in school and for their teachers who would prefer to help children learn rather than control misbehavior. Some of the youngsters become truants and, as in the case of runaways, place their major energies in survival and evasion of authority.

Is there no more humane, practical, and just way of dealing with and solving these difficulties? Indeed, are not some of these problems artificially created? One alternative is to end compulsory school attendance or at least to lower the legal school-leaving age, concomitant with the establishment of voluntary vocational-training programs which would be supported by federal subsidy. It would in essence be an apprenticeship system whereby youngsters could freely seek out interested trainer-employers in the community, just as employers could register their interest in accepting student employees.

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH WORKERS

There has always been a split in social work between those interested in changing individuals and those interested in changing social institutions. However, in regard to children, there has been a general acceptance by all segments of the profession that it is legitimate for the state and to a lesser degree parents to have decisive and controlling power over children's lives. Social work activities have been directed toward seeing that state power is used in a thoughtful, sensitive, and intelligent manner. Social workers have sought to humanize the

institutions dealing with children, while implicitly accepting the involuntary character of the institutions themselves. But a paradox within the profession has been created. The right of self-determination is a fundamental social work principle. Social work also has a long history of commitment to the cause of civil liberties. Despite adherence to such principles, social work finds itself deeply enmeshed in the fabric of social and public agencies which control the lives of children — the group which has the least opportunity to exercise the right of self-determination.

If children's rights became a reality, there would clearly be huge changes in the nature of many social workers' professional relationships. These would become largely voluntary — the kind of relationship most consistent with the traditions of social work. There would also be major changes in specific roles. At the present time, there are large and expensive professional and bureaucratic structures which are organized to keep children in nonvoluntary associations and to work with the problems and hassles such associations generate. They would no longer be needed. If schools were populated by willing students, there would be far less need for school social workers, school psychologists, guidance personnel, and administrators who deal mainly with discipline problems. There are children in residential treatment centers not because of family problems but because of inability to function in school. Police, courts, and probation officers spend a great deal of energy in dealing with truancy, status offenses, incorrigibility, and runaways. With increased children's rights, social work roles would flow directly from children's needs rather than being filtered through structures which, to some extent at least, are organized around social control. Similarly, teachers could concentrate on improving the educational program, and police could concentrate on true crime — juvenile and adult.

Clearly, emphasis on children's rights is no panacea. There will always be troubled families and children. Many youngsters will want to attend school but have problems requiring professional help. Children living away from home will have difficulty finding landlords willing to rent them apartments, and no matter where they live, some will re-experience old conflicts. There will be youngsters who will fail just as badly in job-training as they did in school. The difference will be that psychosocial problems will not be created or aggravated by rigid structures that criminalize deviance. Child pathology and behavior problems will still exist, but in a way that need not involve delinquent identity formation.

"The extension of liberties discussed in this article by no means constitutes a full bill of rights for children. Before children's rights are taken seriously, however, children will have to be taken seriously. That is a challenge to almost all adults."

The extension of liberties discussed in this paper by no means constitutes a full bill of rights for children. I have emphasized home and school because they are central to children, and they are the areas in which social workers are directly involved. Before children's rights are taken seriously, however, children will have to be taken seriously. That is a challenge to almost all adults.

Notes

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The Invention of Childhood

Based on: 'Children, the Victims of Time' by J.H. Plumb

Illustrated by Bob Hewerdine.

CHILDHOOD IS NOT AS NATURAL AS YOU MIGHT THINK. IN MANY WAYS IT IS A SOCIAL CREATION DEVELOPED TO PRODUCE AND PROCESS THE KIND OF PEOPLE THAT SOCIETY WANTS

Elaborate mass produced toys, games, books and entertainment

All are relatively new ideas

Even the words

'Boy' 'Garcon' 'Knabe'

(English) (French) (German)

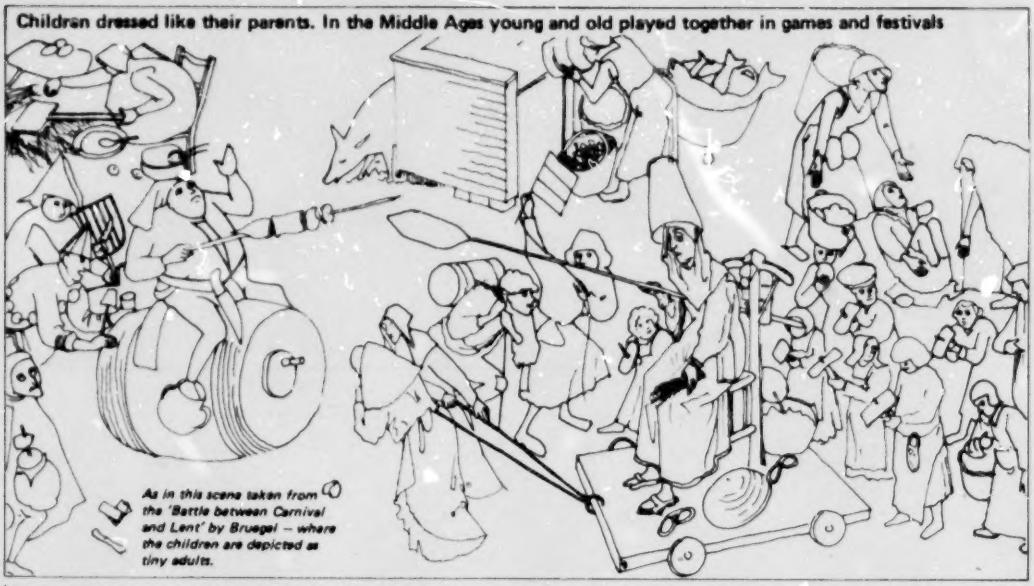
were used differently before the 17th century they simply meant 'dependent' even if the 'Boy' was 50 yrs old.

Just like in South Africa today

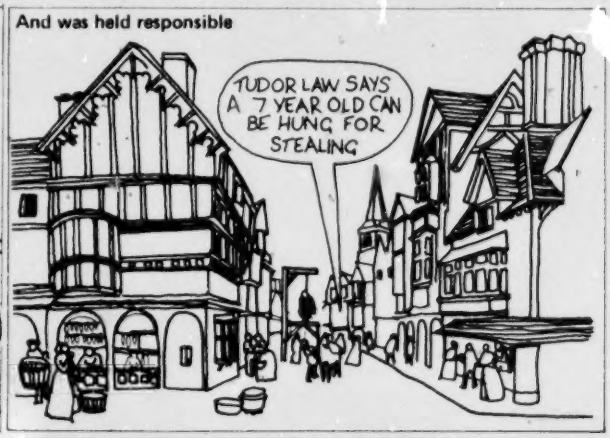
In ancient societies people were regarded as infants till about 7 yrs. old

Then there was an initiation ceremony – usually painful

After which they entered the adult world


Children dressed like their parents. In the Middle Ages young and old played together in games and festivals
As in this scene taken from the 'Battle between Carnival and Lent' by Bruegel – where the children are depicted as tiny adults.

Everyone worked together
AT 8 YEARS I PUT OUT AS AN APPRENTICE
SO HE COULD LEARN HIS TRADE FROM ME


And was held responsible
TUDOR LAW SAYS A 7 YEAR OLD CAN BE HUNG FOR STEALING

In many cases houses were not split up into special rooms, for eating, sleeping, working or cooking.
So children could not escape from the adult world

The small 'father, mother and a few children' kind of family was not very important – particularly since children often died

As the French writer, Montaigne put it

I HAVE LOST TWO OR THREE CHILDREN IN THEIR INFANCY NOT WITHOUT REGRET, BUT WITHOUT GREAT SORROW

Up to the 17th century 75 per cent of all children christened were dead before the age of 5

Changes in childhood took place rapidly after the 17th century

Partly for religious reasons...

MEDIEVAL CHILDREN KNEW THE 'FACTS OF LIFE' BEFORE THEY COULD WALK

BUT NOW WE BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN START OUT 'INNOCENT' AND SHOULD BE KEPT THAT WAY AS LONG AS POSSIBLE

Partly for economic reasons

IN A FEUDAL SOCIETY BOTH LORD AND SERF COULD BE ILLITERATE TOGETHER

BUT NOW SO MUCH DEPENDS ON TRADE AND COMMERCE

AND YOU MUST BE ABLE TO READ AND COUNT TO BE A SUCCESSFUL MERCHANT

So education became more systematic

WE CHILDREN ARE DIVIDED UP INTO CLASSES OF THE SAME AGE GROUP

And reform went relentlessly on to create a separate world

AT HARROW WE WILL HAVE NO DRINKING OR FORNICATION OR GAMBLING!

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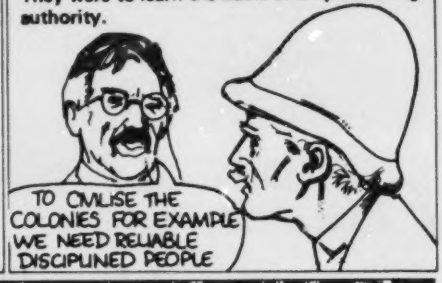
By the end of the 19th century upper class children were even segregated in the home

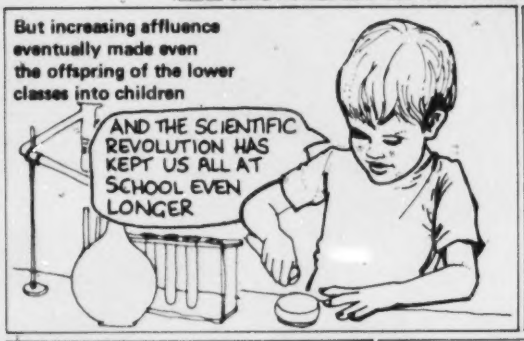
WE ARE FORBIDDEN TO MOST OF THE HOUSE AND CAN ONLY SEE MOTHER AND FATHER AT CERTAIN TIMES
AND WE NOW HAVE OUR OWN SPECIAL KINDS OF CLOTHES

They were to learn the habit of unquestioning authority.

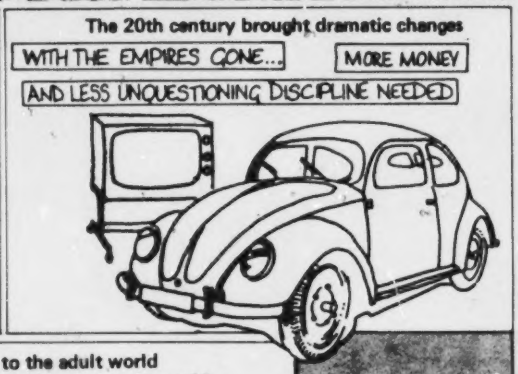


Lower class children however still lived in the adult world. In Victorian London or Paris they drank, gambled, rioted sexually – and worked hard

But increasing affluence eventually made even the offspring of the lower classes into children



The 20th century brought dramatic changes



But even in the 1950's conformity was still demanded of children

With no access to the adult world adolescents rebelled in their own world

Over four centuries children have been pushed into an adult world. Out of their own resourcefulness they have built up their own culture and their own world of play.

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by Keith Hefner

A Look at Children's Oppression and Some Suggestions for Change

"Americans think of themselves as a child-loving people. This is a myth."

• Marian Wright Edelman, Director
Children's Defense Fund

Many people sincerely believe that America is a child-loving country. But as Edelman says, it's not true. Young people, people under age 18, are oppressed. They are discriminated against and they are treated as inferiors by most adults. Slaves counted as only 3/5ths of a person in the constitution — young people are not counted at all! Women got the vote over fifty years ago; and women and black people were entitled to most of the rights of citizens by the middle of the twentieth century. But young people are still second-class citizens. American democracy is "rated X, for adults only."

GOOD INTENTIONS ARE NOT ENOUGH

David Gottleib, an expert on human development, writes that "...despite a reluctance to believe otherwise, American children are in too many instances the victims of indifference, intimidation, abuse, exploitation and vengeance." Young people have few rights and even less power. Contrary to the myths, adults seldom have young people's needs at heart. Too often adults who claim to be acting in young people's interests are really just camouflaging their own interests and motives. For example, many adults harp about the sacrifices they make for their children, when in fact they see their sacrifice as an *investment*. The pay off for this investment is that their children conform to their expectations. It's practically a cliche that when parents start talking about the sacrifices they have made for their children that the next line has to be about how the children are involved in some activity or displaying some trait that isn't worthy of the sacrifices the parents have made, allegedly for the kids. It is clear that parents make sacrifices for their children, but it should be just as clear that parents often make those sacrifices f r their own selfish motives.

Another common argument used by parents to prove their devotion to their child's well-being and aspirations is how much money they spend on property taxes (tuition, etc.) to support their children's education. They fail to mention that the schools they so graciously support are designed to deny young people any meaningful voice in running them. And how many of us know of friends whose parents cut off their tuition when they became involved in activities the *parents* didn't approve of? (One is tempted to note that plantation owners spent lots of money and made certain sacrifices for their slaves, too.)

It's about time we laid to rest the myths of all-loving and all-giving parents and adult-run institutions and let young people themselves have some say in the decisions that affect their lives. Along the way we have to destroy the myth that young people are incompetent and undeserving of rights.

Let's start by examining some of the time-honored rationales for young people's oppression. Then let's look at some of the goals of the young people's liberation movement.

Keith Hefner has been a member of Youth Liberation for 9 years, ever since he helped found it in 1970 at age 15. He has served the organization in many capacities, including as editor of FPS: A Magazine of Young People's Liberation.

TOO CHILDLIKE FOR FREEDOM

It's natural that the best introduction to young people's liberation is a study of the other movements that have been waged by oppressed people in this country. Black people, the poor, women and the elderly, for example, have all discovered that democracy is somehow 'more democratic' for wealthy white males than for them.

Though there are many differences between young people's liberation and the struggles of other groups, the parallels are striking. The three major areas in which such parallels occur are 1) the similarity of the types of oppression faced; 2) the similarities in the rationales used to explain and justify such oppression and; 3) the common goals shared by most oppressed groups.

"It's about time we laid to rest the myths of all-loving, all-giving parents and institutions and let young people themselves have some say in the decisions that affect their lives. Along the way we have to destroy the myth that young people are incompetent and undeserving of rights."

Similar Oppression:

- Black people and women were at one time considered the exclusive property of their "masters," that is, slaveholders and husbands, respectively. Today young people are still considered property of their parents.
- The term "runaway," which is applied to young people who escape an authoritarian situation, originated with slaves who escaped the plantation.
- For much of this nation's history, black people and women have been denied access to political participation, either through outright disenfranchisement or through informal exclusion from parties and organizations. Young people still cannot vote and they are excluded from any other participation.
- Blacks and women have been systematically denied access to economic security and power. Their traditional choice has been between the worst job or no job at all. Young people are still in that position. Child labor laws prevent access to most jobs, no matter what one's skills are; and the few jobs that are available, like babysitting, paper routes and field work, are low-paying or back-breaking or both.
- The 13th Amendment outlawed involuntary servitude, but young people are still forced, often against their will, to be in a certain place at a certain time for a certain number of days each year under threat of arrest.
- The 14th Amendment guaranteed equal protection under the law, but young people are still legally discriminated against in many, many ways.

Similar Rationales for Oppression:

Since America is supposed to be a democracy, with all people created equal, elaborate rationales have been devised to justify the denial of rights and privileges to certain groups of people. There are many similarities between the rationales used to justify discrimination against women and black people and those used to rationalize young people's powerlessness.

Blacks and women were often described as too "childlike" to assume the responsibility of full citizenship. They were irresponsible, carefree and ignorant of any other way of life. Many were reported "happy" about their condition. They got free meals, a roof over their head, and always had people to look after them. What else could they want; what need did they have for rights?

Even the reaction of most adults when told that young people are treated as possessions is not unlike the confused surprise of the slaveholder or husband when told that they treated their charges as possessions: of course they did. They thought it was perfectly natural. They considered women and blacks to be different from themselves, with special needs and ways of looking at the world. They needed protection and they enjoyed serving their masters.

The similarities in the oppression of women, blacks, and young people, and similarities in the rationales for such oppression do not by themselves prove that young people should have more freedom. But they should put the burden

on those who do the oppressing to justify their actions rather than vice versa.

Similarities in Goals:

After the preceding discussion it should come as no surprise that young people are fighting for many of the same goals that other oppressed groups have struggled for: equality under the law; elimination of discriminatory attitudes and practices (in this case called "ageism"); and democratic control over the institutions which affect them.

LEGAL RIGHTS AND DIGNITY

Discrimination and inequality are most clear-cut in the legal system, where our society's ideologies are codified. Young people are absolutely and unequivocally denied the full rights of citizens in a democracy. Minors cannot vote or run for office. They can't sign contracts or own property or work at most jobs. Young people can't initiate legal proceedings, yet they are subject to a whole set of laws, called status offenses, that don't even apply to grownups. Truancy, running away, staying out late at night, having sexual relations, and other 'offenses' were created just for young people. As Gottlieb has said: "In the case of legal rights, children might have fared better had they been spared the efforts of well-intentioned adults."

> "Young people are fighting for many of the same goals that other oppressed groups have struggled for; equality under the law, elimination of discriminatory attitudes and practices (ageism), and democracy which includes them as full participants."

Thanks to "well-intentioned adults," status offenses now account for 25-50% of all young people's cases appearing before juvenile court judges. And one-half of the young people in jail are there for committing these so called crimes.

Even though young people face more restrictive statutes than adults, and even though young people are thought to be in greater need of protection than adults, they have *fewer* legal safeguards than adults. That's because juvenile court proceedings are theoretically not criminal in nature. The philosophy of the juvenile justice system is that young people are supposed to be *helped* by the court, not punished. That philosophy has been an utter failure in practice, as can be seen by studying the history of the juvenile justice system.

THE INVENTION OF DELINQUENCY

At the end of the 1800s penology was being modernized. Biological determinism, which held that certain groups (blacks, immigrants, etc.) were inherently criminal, was on the wane, especially where young people were concerned. The penologists decided that young people were not morally (and therefore not legally) responsible for their actions. Therefore they shouldn't be processed through the punitive adult criminal justice system. Since the young people weren't going to be punished, the reformers said, there was no need for them to have any legal protection. Due process safeguards were considered inappropriate, and juvenile prisoners didn't have to be found guilty. The judge just had to believe that the young person needed institutional supervision, for whatever reasons. The problem with this outdated and unfair system was that young people were not being rehabilitated; they were often receiving long sentences to reformatories and "industrial schools" that were as harsh as any prison.

Maybe you're wondering what happened to all the dangerous delinquents before this marvelous system was developed. Were they terrorizing good citizens? Stealing wagon wheels? Nope. Though there certainly were young criminals back then, the concept of "delinquents" barely existed. Beggars, runaways, vagrants and young people in similar circumstances were pretty much left to their own devices. While this was not an ideal situation, at least those kids weren't being picked up and sent off to juvenile homes or prisons where they could mix with criminals and often faced worse abuse than on the streets.

Then the "well-intentioned adults" came on the scene (most of them middle-class do-gooders) and reacted with horror at the small

armies of unsupervised young people roaming city streets. In order to get legal control over those young people they blurred the distinction between *delinquency* and *dependency*. Prior to this reform a young person usually had to commit a crime to be put in jail. Now all they had to do was be vagrant, or sexually precocious, or disrespectful to authority, or practically anything that adults didn't like (called "incorrigible"). The *broad concept* we now have of delinquency, which allows thousands of young people to be locked up on the slightest pretext, was *invented* by the early juvenile court reformers.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

It wasn't until more than half a century later that this unfortunate system began to change. In 1968 the U.S. Supreme Court finally acknowledged the abuses in the juvenile justice system. A 15-year-old, Gerald Gault, had been accused of making obscene phone calls. He was sentenced to a juvenile home, perhaps until his 21st birthday. An adult could get only two months for the same offense. Gault wasn't allowed to confront his accuser, or have a lawyer. It was obvious to an objective observer that his sentence was *punishment*, not rehabilitation. In its landmark decision, *in re Gault*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that because of the large gap between the "rhetoric and the reality" of the juvenile justice system, Gault should have gotten some rights. Not too many, though. The Court said that young people should be guaranteed these rights, but no others: adequate notice of the charges, the right to counsel, privilege against self-incrimination, and the right to confront witnesses.

Some of the guarantees that children did not receive were the right to a jury trial, the right to procedural safeguards when dealing with other state institutions, such as schools, or the right to post bail. Presumably, if the rehabilitation rhetoric of the juvenile justice system did match reality, young people still wouldn't have any rights. In practice the most important result of *Gault* is that young people are allowed to have a lawyer, and the charade of non-adversary proceedings has begun to break down.

In recent years the Court has shown an unwillingness to expand *Gault*. It specifically ruled that young people do not have the right to a jury trial. It allowed the use of corporal punishment in public schools and rejected the claim that young people have a fundamental right to an education. The Court's promise that "neither the 14th Amendment nor the Bill of Rights is for adults alone" has itself proved to be more rhetoric than reality. In *McKeiver vs. Pa.*, the case in which the Court denied juveniles the right to a jury trial, it admitted that the juvenile court concept was a failure, but said it was not a failure of "constitutional dimensions." That can only mean that the rights of young people are not considered "of constitutional dimensions."

> **"The reaction of most adults when told that young people are treated like possessions is not unlike the confused surprise of the slave-holder or husband when told that they treated their charges as possessions: of course they did! They thought it to be perfectly natural."**

The other landmark Supreme Court decision of the sixties involving young people's rights was *Tinker v. Des Moines*. Like *Gault*, it held promise for young people. The Court ruled that students have the right to freedom of expression, and gave an eloquent defense of student rights: "It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights at the schoolhouse gate. . . State-operated schools may not be enclaves of totalitarianism. School officials do not possess absolute authority over their students. Students in school as well as out of school are persons under our constitution. They are possessed of fundamental rights which the state must respect. . ." It was big talk, and some changes have resulted. But once again rhetoric outdistanced reality by a long shot. The Court stuck in a disclaimer which said that students had freedom as long as they didn't "materially and substantially" disrupt the schools. Courts and administrators have subsequently held that just about anything, from a peaceful demonstration in a school cafeteria to the wearing of a political button, can be disruptive.

The juvenile court supposedly acts "in the best interests of the child." That catch phrase is often a rationalization used by those in power to justify their decisions. It doesn't offer guidelines for how adult power should be exercised, nor does it offer suggestions for letting young people decide what is in their best interest. The best interests doctrine should be replaced with something which is based on the young person's expressed choices.

The best interest doctrine couldn't exist except that those under 18 are considered minors and have fewer legal rights than adults. Minors are *presumed* incompetent to voice their own opinions and pursue their own interests in court. If a young person wants to be heard, it must be proven that she is mature enough to know what she wants. This presumption of incompetency should be reversed so that the court would have to *prove* a minor is incompetent if her wishes were going to be ignored, just as they have to do with adults before their testimony can be ignored.

"Until about 1900 only one person in a family had any legal rights: the father. Wives have since gained a great deal, but children's legal rights have lagged far behind. In many respects children are legal non-entities. They exist only through their adult guardians."

All procedural rights granted adults should be available to young people, as should other legal protections. These rights could apply whenever an institution or the state move against a young person — not just in court.

Current legal doctrine also grants parents a presumed "identity of interest" with their sons/daughters. That is, parents are allowed to be mouthpieces for their children. There is abundant evidence that parents and young people often have different and conflicting needs and opinions. When young people desire to speak for themselves, what *they* say should be taken as their wishes, not what their parents say. Identity of interest often does not exist in fact; let's abolish it in law.

It would be a great step forward if children were granted the same legal rights as adults. However, that wouldn't solve all the problems associated with young people and the law, and it would even create new ones, e.g., financial responsibility and prison sentences for serious offenders, etc. But it would force the state and the courts to treat young people's interests with respect. That is a good starting point from which to work out new problems that arise.

EQUAL PROTECTION? ABOLISH THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

A simple and concise step in the direction of equal rights would be to declare that the 14th Amendment, which demands "equal protection under the law" applies to young people. Age should become a "suspect classification" (that means whenever someone discriminates because of age they must show a *compelling* state interest for that discrimination to exist). No one should be able to discriminate on the basis of a person's age unless they can prove that there is a rational, compelling reason for such discrimination. Of course it is unlikely that will happen until the consciousness of the general population is raised about young people's liberation. Most adults think that the present policies are rational. That means the struggle for young people's liberation will have to be waged on political and educational fronts, as well as legal ones.

There are two major legal actions necessary to expand legal rights and protection for children. The first is to vigorously enforce present court decisions like *Tinker* and *Gault* and to enact legislation which gives those decisions some muscle. The second is to abolish the juvenile justice system entirely.

ACLU attorney Martin Guggenheim presented a persuasive argument for the abolition of the juvenile justice system in the *Children's Rights Report*. After examining ways to improve the juvenile justice system Guggenheim concluded that, "The continued existence of juvenile justice as a separate system is a mistake.

"The juvenile court has operated on a number of premises which are diametrically opposed to basic principles embodied in the Constitution. Normally the state has limited powers to interfere with the liberty of individuals. Most of

these limitations are ignored in juvenile justice because of the professed (beneficient) intention of the state. But it is ludicrous to consider delinquency cases as involving anything other than traditional criminal justice concerns (that is, punishment).

"The juvenile justice system appears to be little more than an excuse to circumvent basic rights of Americans. It is fair to say generally in the juvenile justice system that the liberty rights of children are not taken seriously, even when these rights have been established beyond cavil for adults.

"It is time to look objectively at the juvenile justice system in the U.S. and to call for its complete abandonment. So long as there remains the vestige of a gloss of beneficience, the dangers of bringing too many children into the system are too great."

Guggenheim goes on to note that, "The juvenile justice system is extremely unfair to the accused child," and that the state has always enjoyed the 'best of both worlds'.

"Not only may the state bring before it as many juveniles as it wants and easily acquire legal jurisdiction over them as easily as possible, but it has never been forced to deliver to children the promises of the system." Few children benefit from the supposed services of the juvenile justice system.

Most people hesitate to do away with the juvenile justice system because they fear that children will be placed in prisons with adults. But Guggenheim points out that only 3% of juvenile court cases consist of major felonies. And many states are moving to waive these cases to adult courts anyway. The vast majority of young people would be better off if all they had to contend with was the adult criminal justice system.

DO PARENTS OWN THEIR CHILDREN?

An area where young people have even fewer rights and protection than the courts is the family. Unlike the courts, which are somewhat limited in what they can do to young people, parents are granted virtually absolute power over their children. Young people are deemed property of their parents. Of course the oppression of young people by their parents is not new. Colonial America gave a father the right to put his child to death, as did Roman Law. Over 2000 years ago, Aristotle concluded that "The justice of a master or father is different from that of a citizen, for a son or slave is property, and there can be no injustice to one's own property." The Bible was more succinct: "Spare the rod and spoil the child." The idea that parents should have absolute power over their children should have died long ago, along with its proponents.

"Young people are deemed property of their parents. Of course that is nothing new. Over 2000 years ago Aristotle concluded that, 'The justice of a master or father is different from that of a citizen, for a son or a slave is property, and there can be no injustice to one's property."

The basic problem with the family, then, is that parents have too much power over their children. Parents are still allowed to treat kids as property in most respects. However, unlike the family dog or kitchen table, young people have lives of their own to live. The dictatorial control that parents now have often leads to tremendous amounts of physical and psychological damage.

The only thing more destructive than the current state of relationships between parents and young people is the fact that most people believe everything is right and natural. Though the analogy is sometimes too strong, it is useful to compare the situation of young people to that of slaves.

- Young people are expected to obey everything their parents tell them.
- Young people are supposed to adopt their parents' morals and values.
- Young people may not leave home without their parents' permission and may not engage in conduct which their parents forbid.
- Young people have no rights within the family except those that their parents are gracious enough to extend them.
- Young people are dependent on their parents for food and shelter.
- Young people are required to take their parents' last name.
- Young people are expected to subordinate

themselves and their interests to those of their parents.

It sounds harsh, but there is no getting around the fact that the typical family is totalitarian, a dictatorship. The fact that some are more benevolent than others doesn't change the basic relationship at all.

Parents exercise their control over young people in many ways, most of which are familiar to everyone. Parents are larger and stronger, and have more experience and information. That enables them to manipulate their young people by limiting or distorting information, or to physically control them when other methods fail. Parents receive all the family income, and are not obligated to share it equally with the young people. Parents can decide where the family lives, what it does for vacation, what kind of food is eaten, what religion and social activities are engaged in — the list is endless.

> "Schools treat students in much the same way parents treat children. They are authoritarian and condescending and have little respect for the rights of young people. School officials are ven allowed to beat unruly children, just as are parents."

One result of parents keeping all power in the family is that young people become incompetent and irresponsible. Since they don't really have any legitimate power to make decisions, they learn to get away with whatever they can. Young people learn to manipulate to get what they want. They don't learn responsibility because they never get a chance to practice it. They don't learn to handle money because it comes to them in capricious and arbitrary ways. After a while young people believe that they are naturally irresponsible, and that only getting older will solve the problem. As they become older and get a few tastes of freedom like use of the car, or a rare night when both parents are out, it is perfectly normal for them to "abuse" that freedom. Younger children quickly get out of hand when left without adult supervision because they also seldom have the opportunity to learn to take care of themselves.

There are several reasons why parents reinforce young people's incompetence. First, parents usually don't know any better, so they have low expectations for their children. Second, parents and children usually have different standards about a whole lot of things, from what is fun, to how to eat properly, to what movies are appropriate. Parents think it is their right to make their children conform to their expectations, so they encourage the attitude in their children that they aren't capable of deciding things themselves; that they have to follow mommy's and daddy's lead.

Of course some supervision and direction by more experienced people is needed and asked for by young people. Young people can benefit from adult experience and knowledge, especially if it isn't forced on them. But it's difficult to draw a line where adult power is genuinely protective and helpful, and where it is dictatorial. For example, few people would disagree that preventing a 2-year-old from running in front of a car is protective. But it is not so clear to most parents that telling their 14-year-old to be in by midnight or be grounded for a week is an abusive use of power. The best way to approach the situation is to have a few guidelines. Parents should realize that the fact of being a parent gives them absolutely no inherent right (legalities aside) to tell young people what to do. They should think *very seriously* before forbidding their children to do anything. Instead of using force or threats parents should rely on rational arguments. If they can't convince their children by explaining honestly how they feel about a situation, they don't have much basis to stop them from doing what they want to do. And, as most parents know, if they can't talk them out of something rationally, young people often go behind their backs and do it anyway.

There are some things that parents should never do, including spanking or other physical abuse, or showing outright disrespect for their children's ideas or rights. Unfortunately most of these changes won't happen until young people have some power, a topic to be discussed later.

Another useful guideline for adults to use to see how well they treat young people is to compare how they treat young people with how they treat their older friends. Do you pay

attention to your friends' ideas? If they do something you disapprove of, do you spank them and send them home or to their room? Do you forbid them from seeing certain people or make them come home at certain times? You might try to convince a friend of all of the above, but you would recognize that you have no right to force your opinions or expectations on them. If you tried, they probably wouldn't be your friend much longer.

DEMOCRACY BEGINS AT HOME

Decisions in a household should be decided on the basis of fairness and democracy, not parental authority. For example, chores should be divided according to a plan agreed to or voted on by everyone. Of course, if the young people aren't able to participate in cooking, for example, they shouldn't have much say in what time dinner is served or what is cooked, though parents should take their preferences into consideration. Young people should take their share of responsibility and should get equal priority for privileges, like use of the car. Young people should be able to use the house for meetings or parties (and should clean up afterwards). Parents can democratize some of the power relationships around the house by listening to what their children have to say and really trying to understand it. Parents can be invaluable in helping young people understand and articulate their own feelings. But to do that, they have to be honest about their disagreements, without trying to impose their own values or ideas.

This doesn't mean parents shouldn't try to convey values and opinions to their children. Of course they should. But they should do it in a non-authoritarian manner.

Parents can begin to struggle against their ageism in many concrete ways. They can give their children an equal share of their paycheck (deducting for room and board as long as the kids choose to live at home) and let them decide what clothes they wear, what movies they see, whether they want to save for college, what they want to do for summer vacation, etc. Parents could even offer a "payroll deduction plan" which would put money away for college or a new bike, since *everyone* has trouble saving money. But in the final analysis it should be up to the young person to decide how she spends discretionary income.

ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

Unfortunately, parents can only do so much work on their own to struggle against their ageism. Pressure from young people makes things move a lot faster and further. But in order to exert pressure young people have to have some independent power bases of their own. A 12-year-old with $500 in the bank has a better chance to carry out on a threat to move out if things aren't changed than one with no resources. Parents can help young people to get that power by sharing income, as mentioned above, but many parents wouldn't do that, and some are too poor.

Therefore, as long as young people can't work and have no other means of support, they should have a right to unemployment benefits or welfare, payable directly to them.

ALTERNATIVE LIVING SITUATIONS

In order for young people to exercise true independence they need to be able to think for themselves and they need some financial support. For some young people there will also need to be alternative living arrangements. A million young people try to leave home every year. Kids often latch onto the idea of liberation and self-respect much faster than their parents, which can lead to irreconcilable differences at home. When young people decide life at home is intolerable they must have the right to an alternative living situation. Someday the idea of young people leaving their parents before they turn eighteen will be as common as divorce. And it could be handled in some of the same ways. Young people who aren't sure they want to leave forever could get a legal separation, good for a certain period of time, during which they could act as their own guardian, or have another person act as a temporary guardian.

If after tasting life without their parents they decided it wasn't so hot, they could return home. On the other hand, if they were happier, they should be able to file for divorce and emancipation. Such a solution is only fair; after all, adults can get out of a marriage, and they

choose their partners! Young people who leave home should receive the money their parents previously spent to support them unless they have some other means of support. Young people's freedom and right to live where they choose is meaningless without economic freedom.

By providing financial support to runaways, many problems could be solved. Young people could escape from impossible home situations. Runaway houses and temporary shelters could become much nicer places if the young people could pay for their stay. All sorts of other alternatives could develop. Adults with no children, or who were just interested in helping young people out, could take in someone without incurring an economic burden for short or long periods of time. Young people could form houses or communes of their own, without adults. This "voucher system" of guardianship would provide young people with meaningful alternatives for growing up.

> "Schools and families socialize young people for work. In the workplace the last thing that is desired is anyone who can ask significant questions about the role of workers. Someone who asked questions like that would find that workers have no more rights than public school students."

So far we have concentrated on the changes that could be made in families. These changes may seem a bit far-fetched unless we take a look at the types of changes that have already occurred in families over the past century.

Until about 1900 only one person in a family had any legal rights: the father. Since that time wives have been granted most of the rights of single women. Young people's legal rights within the family have lagged far behind. Generally young people can't choose where or how they would like to live. They can't enter into litigation or consent to most medical care or other professional services. Therefore young people are required to have guardians who can do those things for them. In many respects young people are legal non-entities. They exist only through their adult guardians.

FAMILY LAW—PARENTS GAIN, NOT CHILDREN

The Supreme Court has been slow to recognize the rights of young people in families. It recently ruled that young people have the right to abortions without parental consent, but most youth rights cases that have been won haven't really extended rights to young people. Rather, they have expanded parental power at the expense of state power. As one lawyer says: "These cases never mention the rights or interests of children involved. Since they rest entirely on a doctrine of parental right, the question of whether a parent may not be loyal to the interests of the child is not discussed." The closest the Court has come to recognizing the rights of young people as separate from their parents was in a dissent. In the case of *Wisconsin v. Yoder* a group of Amish parents requested that their children be exempted from compulsory education laws. The Court held that parents did have the right to keep their children out of school for religious reasons without hearing from two of the three young people involved in the case.

In a ground-breaking dissent, Justice Douglas stood up for young people's rights: he disagreed with the Court's notion that it was only the parents' rights which were at stake.

"The difficulty with this approach is that, despite the Court's claim, parents are seeking to vindicate not only their own free exercise claims, but also those of their high school age children. . . On this important and vital issue of education I think the children should be entitled to be heard. It is the future of the student, not the future of the parents, that is imperiled by today's decision. . . It is the student's judgment, not his parents', that is essential if we are to give full meaning to what we have said about the Bill of Rights and the right of students to be masters of their own destiny."

It will be a long time before the ideas that Douglas expressed in his dissent become law. In the meantime young people will need other ways to voice their opinions. Even after the idea of the courts listening to young people becomes law, there will be many instances where young

people are genuinely too young to speak for themselves (if they don't know how to talk, for example) or too overwhelmed or too inarticulate. The best, though still imperfect, solution to this problem is to supply young people with well-trained advocates whenever their parents, the state, or another third party move against them, or when young people initiate action against someone else. After all, parents and the state have access to trained representatives.

The advocate should be independent, beholden only to the young person. In the case of younger children an advocate would act mostly as a fact finder, gathering information about the young person's condition. With older people an advocate could help to articulate the young person's preferences and clarify her thoughts. The advocate could help prevent parents or the state from intimidating the young person. Providing young people with advocates who are trained in youth rights and the concepts of young people's liberation would be a tremendous improvement over the current situation.

RESPECT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

It can't be overemphasized that one key to young people's liberation is an underlying respect for young people's integrity and capabilities. Many parents think there has already been a youth liberation movement and it has gone too far. They can't control their children; they don't pay any attention to their authority. But that kind of "liberation" is actually a mockery of real liberation. Young people may struggle to get out from their parents' control, but they usually believe they are doing something wrong. They can't be honest with their parents about how they feel. It's like the family dog stealing some food at the table when no one is around. You can't stop it from doing that but if you catch it, it cowers and tucks its tail between its legs. The dog will disobey whenever it can, but it always knows that what it is doing is wrong. It's unfortunate that human beings must suffer through similar predicaments.

When parents can accept the illegitimacy of their power and treat young people as equal human beings, and young people can do the same towards parents, everyone will be a lot better off. But as long as parents resist the full implications of youth liberation and don't apply them wholeheartedly, their children will probably continue to resist them either outright or in sneaky and destructive ways.

SCHOOLS TEACH OBEDIENCE

School is the second most important institution young people encounter after the family and it also is a powerful socializer. The oppression of young people in schools has been well documented in many places, including *Unfair to Young People* (see page 00). Here I will simply point out some major criticisms of the schools.

Schools treat students in much the same way parents treat young people. They are authoritarian and condescending and have little respect for the rights of young people. Such behavior is justified on the *in loco parentis* doctrine, which allows schools to act as substitute parents during the time they have charge of the young people. *In loco parentis* (literally, in place of the parents) is a fossil left over from the days when most students went to boarding schools and the school needed some kind of parental authority. Because of this doctrine school officials are even allowed to beat unruly students, just as are parents.

BELLS AND TARDY SLIPS

Students have no recognized right to self-determination over their education. They are supposed to be passive recipients of knowledge, despite all the evidence that people learn better when they are active participants in the educational process. But there is a reason why students must be oppressed: they aren't in school just to learn facts and figures. The most important function of the schools is to socialize young people to uncritically accept their society.

The conditions of the schools reflect their primary purpose. Bells, tardy slips, hall passes and the like all impress on the student that being in their seat, on time, is more important than what they learn while sitting there. Instead of being evaluated on their work, students receive rewards (grades) that are often quite unrelated to how much they've learned. Learning to work for those external rewards is invaluable later on in the "real world" where most people work at boring jobs over which they have little control and the only reward they can

possibly expect is a paycheck.

DISCRIMINATION AND TRACKING

The schools also prepare students for their future rank in society. The tracking system separates rich from poor, black from white, male from female, and gets everyone prepared to accept their fate. Students in the lower tracks learn that their lot in life is their own fault. If only they studied harder or had higher IQ's they too could be on top. The tracking system helps to "cool out" the aspirations of the vast majority of the students who must fail, by definition.

Racism, which is so valuable in keeping working people apart and unorganized, is cultivated in the schools. Black students are suspended more often. Their gains, such as black history and affirmative action in hiring, are made to look like losses to white students. ("We don't have enough money for black studies *and* music.") The schools also help to promote sexism as can be seen by the continuing predominance of females in home economics classes and males in shop. Activities like the election of a homecoming queen and cheerleading also reinforce old stereotypes about women. Fortunately this situation is slowly beginning to change.

> **"Minors are presumed to be incompetent to voice their own opinions and pursue their own interests in court. This presumption should be reversed so that courts have to prove the minor is incompetent before her wishes can be ignored."**

The school decision-making process is a microcosm of the larger society. Decisions are made at the top and enforced through the ranks. Students on the bottom have no say in what goes on. That too is good practice for later experience on the job or in the political system. In a society where more and more jobs require little or no skills except the ability to respect authority, schools are doing an admirable job of preparing the young.

HOW DID SCHOOLS GET THIS WAY?

Anyone who closely follows the schools is familiar with the criticisms that have just been made. The important question is how did the schools get so screwed up and how can they be changed? Some people think that bad teachers or evil administrators or a shortage of funds is the problem. Some people think that if we only had more alternatives everything would be better. Still others believe that if we could get schools back to their original purpose of helping people get ahead all would be fine. Well, some schools are poorly run, and some administrators are clods, and most school systems could use more money — but those are not the root problems.

The origin of the problem lies with the origin of mass public education itself. Schools were never meant to be democratic or to equalize opportunity in society. Rather, schools were designed to stabilize society. Racism, sexism, tracking, grades, authoritarianism and student powerlessness were part of the system from the beginning. That's because the purpose of schooling has always been to force young people to adapt to and accept an unequal and unfair society — not analyze and change it. There is little likelihood that the schools can be fundamentally changed without changing the society they serve. That doesn't mean people shouldn't struggle to change the schools. It just means that they should keep their struggle in perspective and realize what they are fighting against.

DICTATORSHIP OR DEMOCRACY?

If we know that young people are oppressed and can point to many specific examples of that oppression we should also be able to show some of its general causes and origins. Some of those causes have already been mentioned, such as parents' larger size and greater knowledge and experience. But why do we have a society in which good people are encouraged to use their physical and other advantages to oppress young people rather than to help them? To answer that

question we have to search for the "preconditions" of young people's oppression — the basic relations in society — and examine how those fundamental relations affect the treatment of young people. Unfortunately, very little research or thought has been done in this area. Following is a summary of some ideas people have put forth and their tentative conclusions.

As has already been pointed out, the most important institutions that young people interact with, the schools and the family, are totalitarian in nature. So is the workplace, where adults spend most of their time and energy. We have a social system in which the needs of most people are not likely to be met satisfactorily simply because our major institutions, especially the workplace, are designed to prevent democratic control over them. These institutions are run from the top down to benefit the interests of those at the top. Since most people don't have the power to enforce their needs, those needs often go unmet. The contradiction between people's aspirations and their inability to turn those aspirations into reality results in tension in society.

People or groups who feel most strongly that their needs are not being met often resort to "anti-social" activity. For example, young people may vandalize their schools or throw tantrums or become excessively rebellious. Workers go on wildcat strikes or do shoddy work. People in particularly desperate straits sometimes resort to rioting and violence to make their needs known.

Since the American economic and political system is geared to private profit and control by a small minority, it could break down if large numbers of people began demanding a voice in decision-making. In order to make sure that doesn't happen, there have to be methods of keeping the vast majority of people complacent about their situation or unable to change it. The mass media and the educational system play a major role in pacifying people. Racism and sexism help to keep working people divided so that if they do try to struggle to change things they will be ineffective. As a last resort the police and national guard can and sometimes are used to maintain order.

MYSTIFICATION

However, society runs much more smoothly when most people accept its basic premises. In our society that means accepting a situation of relative powerlessness and a lack of democracy (except in parts of the political arena). Since most people want to have as much control over their lives as possible there need to be ways to make people *think* they have as much control as is possible. People have to be *mystified* about the true relations of power in society.

> **"Over the past 100 years young people have been increasingly isolated from participation in society. They have lost the opportunity to test themselves in the real world, and thus much of their ability to understand and transform it."**

A worker who believes higher wages, not high profits, are the cause of inflation will be less likely to strike. Poor people who believe that are less likely to participate in demonstrations than if they believe that the system of private profit and hierarchical control is the root of the problem.

THE ISOLATION OF THE YOUNG

One way to keep people from learning about their society is to keep them isolated from the society as a whole; except in those situations where they are needed, such as in the workplace, and in those situations where they believe the social relations are just, such as in the voting booth.

Over the past hundred years, young people have become increasingly isolated from participation in the society. In earlier times children participated in the work of the family and the society from a young age. Young people learned about farming by farming and about political power by having their family's land stolen by the railroad magnates. Young people learned practically everything by directly experiencing it

— by acting on and changing their environment. But in the last century young people have been increasingly removed from adult society and shut up in families and schools. They have lost the opportunity to learn by testing themselves in the real world. Young people no longer *know* the world for as Piaget points out, "To know something is not merely to be told it or to see it, but to act upon it, to modify it and to transform it."

Part of the reason for this change, of course, is the information explosion. It is no longer practical or possible to learn all the skills necessary for survival solely through direct experience. But the information explosion is an inadequate explanation for the drastic separation of young people from practical experience. Actually, the fact that so much information comes second-hand nowadays makes it a necessity that young people have a wide variety of practical experience in order that they can effectively evaluate that information. One who has never had practical experience has little choice but to accept printed information because one has no reliable means of refuting it.

Young people do not get that experience. They seldom have the opportunity to look at the world in an active and critical manner. Young people don't go out into the world to appropriate information for themselves. Rather, it comes to them, predigested in blocks called grades and subjects. Schooling and the nuclear family isolate young people from the "real world" of life and work until they finish their education and are thus certified to be adults.

What are the effects upon human beings who are as isolated as average young people are in modern society? One obvious effect is that they graduate from high school and college with collosal ignorance of how the real world works — from political systems to federal income tax withholding on their paycheck. Another effect of the isolation of young people from active participation in the world is the creation of people who are fundamentally alienated from their society. Eighteen- and 22-year-old adults graduating from high schools and colleges often don't have the faintest notion that they can play any significant role in their society — that they can struggle to change society to meet their needs. Behind the self-confident bravado of young graduates is usually an empty feeling of powerlessness and uncertainty.

In a democratic society this alienation of the young should be seen as a major crisis. Democracies need people who are able to ask significant questions about apparent social, political and economic contradictions and who are then able to take constructive action to change the society, to move it forward.

On the other hand, a society whose major institutions are totalitarian and undemocratic has no need for free, inquiring human beings. The *un*democratic nature of this society follows from the undemocratic nature of the workplace, which is the institution for which schools and the family train young people. In the workplace the last thing that is desired from the viewpoint of managers or owners is anyone who can ask significant questions about the nature of the corporation and the role of workers. Someone who asked questions like that would find that workers have no more rights than public school students, probably even less.*

If the preceding analysis is correct, the liberation of young people will have to involve fundamental social change. Young people will have to be integrated back into the mainstream of society. They were removed when factories became so horrible that no one could imagine young people working there. The correct solution then would have been to humanize the factories so that young people could have worked in them. As it was adults were forced to suffer inhuman factory conditions and often brought home their rage and frustrations to take out on children. Work doesn't have to be oppressive, for adults or for children. In fact, it can be educational and rewarding. But to make it that way people need to take control of the major institutions of society and ensure that they are run democratically to meet the needs of the vast majority of people. That is a task that can only be accomplished by united action among young and old, black and white, men and women — the American people.

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* *See the article, "Education and Control," by James Hilborn (listed in the Bibliography) for a more detailed discussion of isolation and alienation.*

Changing Childhood

An Epilogue

Illustrated by Bob Hewerdine.

There are frightening children's problems all over the world, in the way we treat them and the way they treat us.
HUNGRY CHILDREN IN POOR COUNTRIES, BATTERED BABIES AND VANDALS IN RICH COUNTRIES WHAT CAN WE DO?
Certainly we must do more
than just patch things up
Young children are very vulnerable
TO THE POVERTY THAT AFFECTS US ALL
BUT JUST SETTING CHILDREN ASIDE FOR TREATMENT IS NO LONG TERM SOLUTION
And helping individuals can be part-icularly divisive
WE HAVE ENOUGH INEQUALITY AS IT IS
Genuine development involves the whole community working together, parents and children
CHILDREN FOR US ARE NOT A LUXURY ANYWAY THEY'RE A NECESSITY
WE SUPPORT THEM AND THEY HELP US
AND WHEN WE GROW UP WE MUST HELP OUR PARENTS WHEN THEY ARE OLD
Children in poor communities can take on responsibility
OF COURSE I EARN A LIVING- I HAVE TO
But imagine a middle class Western child on the streets of a Third World city
Progress has reduced many to naive help-lessness

Dividing up daily life has excluded Western children from the adult world
HAVING CHILDREN DO THIS KIND OF WORK WOULD BE BRUTAL
And split families up
I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT HE DOES AT ALL
So people can take only a small part in each others lives
BOP!
SOCK!
Not surprisingly some children cut off from responsibility turn in on themselves or to mindless violence
IF THAT'S PROGRESS MAYBE IT'S NOT SUCH A GOOD IDEA AFTER ALL
The most useful thing children can have in an increasingly organised world is an independence of mind and spirit – one that adults can best foster by passing on real responsibility
AND ALLOWING US
AS MUCH CONTROL AS POSSIBLE OVER OUR OWN LIVES
Changing childhood will mean moving to a society that treats children and adults in a humane way and actively brings children into our lives rather than setting them conveniently apart.

by Stan Davis

Where Goeth Thou, Alternative Youth Services?

It has been an interesting time to hang around the Youth Network Council. Two events occurred recently that both disturbed and depressed me.

I have serious reservations about the issues raised at a recent Council meeting on "program issues" and about the issues discussed in a recent *Newsline* article.

First I'll talk about the Council meeting. At that meeting workshops were held on various types of service delivery, such as drop-in centers and street work, family counseling, alternative education and other methods.

I attended the session on drop-in centers and street work. The entire focus of that workshop turned out to be on drop-in centers. Issues emerged such as the best location, types of programs, and how to avoid a group of kids forming a clique around the center.

The longer the session went, however, the more it became evident that for many of those in attendance the drop-in center was not seen as the means to an end, but as an end in itself. The high point (or low, depending on how you look at it) came when one center representative said, in response to how to best document drop-in center activities, that drop-in was the chief point of intake at that agency. After three visits to the drop-in center, a "face sheet interview" was required of all young people and a "treatment plan" developed.

Stan Davis founded the Northwest Youth Outreach (Chicago) in 1959. Since that time he has been an outspoken advocate for community-based outreach programs. He has also acted as a consultant to a variety of public and private youth service agencies. This article is reprinted from the Chicago Youth Network Council newsletter.

WHAT IS AN ALTERNATIVE?

Then came the recent issue of *Newsline* with the article on so-called Alternative Youth Services. The article glorifies the goal of these services as "bringing a new generation of young people into American society." It celebrates the increased labeling of youth service workers as "preventers," "diverters," and "early interveners." The article concludes by praising the virtues of the institutionalization process — however "open-ended" it may be.

These events cry for a new discussion of what we, in the Youth Network Council, mean by "alternative" services. We must grapple with the serious philosophical issues involved in providing genuine help to young people. We must examine the potential contradictions between providing services and engaging in labeling which often increases the "extension and enlargement of institutional control over individuals."

I wish to address some of these issues by discussing my view of alternative youth services.

Let's begin with the basics. How do we define alternative youth services? Initially the stress comes from the work to "serve." To serve is defined as "laboring as a servant." Thus, to provide service is to engage in "the occupation or status of a servant . . . performance of labor for the benefit of another or at another's command" (Webster).

The word "alternative" comes from the word alternate which means "other." Webster's first definition of alternative is "offering a choice of two (or loosely, several) things."

To translate all this into some workable definition, alternative youth services to me

means *serving* youth in ways *other* than the ways that are traditionally available.

VALUES IN ALTERNATIVE YOUTH SERVICES

But, *to what* are we an alternative? And how does an alternative youth service worker act differently than her counterpart in the traditional world? I feel that the following points should be encompassed in the value system and practice of an alternative agency:

1. The youth worker should view the youth she attempts to serve as a total person. We are not working with "status offenders," "drug abusers," or "juvenile delinquents." We are working with young people who are far too complex to fit into such neat categories. While our services might be funded around specific symptoms, it is important for alternative service agencies to constantly hold out for a wholistic view of those they seek to serve. The stigmatization game is one we may need to play to survive economically, but we must resist this false view in our practice.

> "The alternative youth service worker should demystify the service process in order to teach those she serves how the assistance is performed. This equips young people to help themselves, and expands the helping process far beyond the small circle of youth service workers."

2. To minimize the increasing tendency to label and stigmatize, alternative youth services should resist delivery systems that require labeling to receive funding. This medical model, clinic-based delivery system should not be a part of any alternative youth service delivery system.

3. The type of service delivery which does the least to stigmatize young people is that which places the worker on the front lines. This demands that youth service workers be radically community based; that they become immersed in the total life of the community in which young people are set.

The focus of alternative service delivery should be on the worker going out to site locations. This outreach-based style begins the process of a relationship in the most natural, non-threatening setting (for the young person) that can be found.

4. The alternative youth service worker should view her goals as assisting young people to function well in society; to give them options that increase their control over their lives. The alternative youth service worker is *not* there to increase institutional control over the young person (either traditional or alternative). Rather, the worker's mission is to equip the young person with the ability to become as independent as possible.

5. The alternative youth service worker should view service as a two-way street — that is, she can learn a great deal from the young people she serves. This attitude toward service must be a reality if we are to conquer the arrogance of classical therapy which paternalistically sees the process of serving as a one-way relationship, and never allows for a two-way relationship to be established.

6. The alternative youth service worker should, whenever possible, demystify the service process in order to teach those she serves how the assistance is performed. This equips young people to try and help themselves and also helps to expand the helping process far beyond the circle of service workers.

7. The youth worker should act as an advocate for the young people she serves. To advocate means to plead the case of another. An alternative service worker or agency should plead the case of those who are relatively powerless to those in authority. To be an effective advocate, the youth worker must know the nature of authority. Advocacy also means risk — risk of stating an unpopular position, supporting a 'bad kid', challenging an unjust social system. True advocacy is not the easy, low-risk activity it has come to be today.

This list of characteristics is only a beginning toward a clearer definition of alternative youth service. The process of redefinition is not easy. But if recent workshops and articles are any indication, we as alternative service workers and agencies had better do some hard thinking

about our role and function. It is easy to lose sight of our values in the face of hard times and more people needing service than we can hope to serve.

But if we don't stop to think and redefine, some other group of smart-ass upstarts are going to start hanging out with kids just to see what's happening and share some slice of life with them. Those of us waving the alternative service banner will look down our noses and say, "Hey, you can't do that. You don't know the right people. We don't know your view of the juvenile justice system. We bet you don't even have an MSW, or 'clinical experience'. Say, man, you're really weird."

On that day we will have met the enemy and found them to be us.

"The type of service delivery that does the least to stigmatize young people is that which places the worker on the front lines. This demands that youth service workers be radically community based; that they become immersed in the lives of young people in their community."

by James C. Whiteside

Someone Ought to Find a Better Way to Help Kids

Someone has. Quite a few have. But something is stalling the implementation. From juvenile delinquency to education, today's social reformers boldly state that this society is a crime against children, but they then call only for child helpers instead of crime fighters. At the same time reformers admit that helping and do-gooding are very suspicious roles, their proposals continue to expect results from persons in such roles. Wouldn't it be more sensible to expect results from youth and children themselves? Of course it would, if they were organized. So why aren't we organizing them?

Good ideas have come from John Holt, Jonathan Kozol, George Dennison and others on changing the pupil/teacher relationship. Holt later mentioned the need for larger social change and Christopher Jencks and Herb Kohl call for socialism. But no one seems to be stating what will accomplish something now. Most reformers have been asking for change as though it would drop out of heaven. I can see no manna. We are all pussyfooting around the "how."

James C. Whiteside was until recently director of youth services for five small New England towns centered in New Milford, CT. He holds a M.A. in social change from the Cambridge-Goddard Graduate School and was formerly lecturer in sociology at Manchester (CT) Community College.

DEDICATION CAN'T SUBSTITUTE FOR POOR DIRECTION

While everyone else in the society is organizing and arming to the teeth, legally if not literally, as social helpers we only keep promising youth that help is coming. Watch us, look about. You can see us dashing by with our latest schemes, hard work, and dedication in hand. Surely, nothing serves to cloud vision better

than dedication. Social workers seem to feel that if we can just double our dedication we can overcome our confusion.

Then, when we know what we *should* be doing we might actually *do* something.

After all, everyone who cares knows the issues: arbitrary authority and the quality of child life. Several groups are working hard on the legal issues. But as many people have pointed out, the myriad issues involved in children's rights are not all that accessible to legal action. It is also unlikely that litigation by itself can develop a sense of purpose or a capacity for action among young people. If it even catalyzed such a purpose, the children's rights movement would take a giant step forward.

Of course, regardless of the importance or quality of legal initiatives young people form no enduring political constituency because they can't vote. However, the assumption that young people have *no* power touches the core of the dilemma. Reformers are talking and writing around a virtual black hole in the sky of youth theory. We act as if there really is no youth constituency. With few exceptions no one seems willing to even imply that youth are their own constituency and that they need organizing. Why? Are we frightened by the size of the task or the social and political implications?

Institutional failure has spread to schools, courts, families and government and has engulfed us all. The official youth agencies are relatively useless. As the Children's Defense Fund has put it: "No one is against children; the question is who is for them?" My question is *aren't they for themselves?* And if so, then why aren't we organizing them to act on their own behalf? We seem to be paternalistically avoiding their desire and ability to defend themselves so we can receive our points for helping them. They could and would defend themselves if we had the guts to show them how.

In a search of the literature on child rights and educational criticism for the last four years I have been unable to find one single statement supporting organizing of youth or even a reference to an organizing principle that might help youth. The fact that professionals in the field are not talking about this means we are only treating youth and their problems. We are either too scared to talk about organizing or too defeatist to try it. In either case we come off like some white liberal in the civil rights movement. We are willing to cry out on behalf of the oppressed but fear their organizing lest things get 'out of hand'.

"In a search of the literature on child rights for the last four years I have been unable to find one single statement supporting organizing of youth, or even a reference to an organizing principle that might help youth."

ARE WE AFRAID OF ORGANIZING KIDS?

What are we afraid of? I submit that the scare is that kids have numbers and that means muscle power, that they have been and are being systematically abused and they know it (as do we), that they have built up a backlog of resentment and we sense it, that they presumably have fewer restraints on vengeance than the rest of us, and that they might just love nothing better than the opportunity to get back at us all. Clearly, that is a risk we must run.

But by letting our fear-filled presumptions control us and stop us we place ourselves in a position analogous to the public, casual observers, and prison officials at Attica. By seeing youth as different and something less than we are, we become sure that once they recognize their power they will (unlike us) respond from their worst instincts. Are we afraid of youth like we were the men of D-yard at Attica, afraid they will not behave with decency and humanity?*

If what I am suggesting here is true — that our unconscious fear and disrespect of youth has paralyzed our ability to even think about what needs to be done — then we are on the verge of becoming, if we have not already become, part of the problem itself. It is not enough in the present situation to be *for* children and youth, or professional or hardworking. In the present

* *I am indebted to Tom Wicker for this insight in* A Time to Die, *Ballantine, 1975, p. 391.*

context that may be merely being nice. Being nice in the past has usually meant a failure of nerve to act. We have probably now arrived at a situation where being nice no longer counts, where we have to go on to what will count, to what will make a substantial difference. That is, we must get on to organizing youth in such a way and by such means that they can actively fight on their own behalf.

That kind of organizing is not some kind of simple student unionism; whether they can go to the bathroom or not, have pseudo representation or not, or minor responsibilities. The organizing that should occur should prepare youth to evaluate the causes of their condition as a first step toward controlling it. They should gain the skills to enable them to investigate the causes of the lowered quality of their lives, the misery of their situation and the strengths and weaknesses of the tyrannies they face. It should be a youth organizing that can scrutinize the whole youth population and report violation of rights. It should build competence in these skills and the confidence that young people can better their own condition.

> "It is not enough in the present situation to be for youth, or professional or hard-working. Being nice no longer counts. We have to go on to what will make a substantial difference. We must get on to organizing youth so that they can actively fight on their own behalf."

If youth are to do so, such competence must include the ability to present an organized and coherent front to the arbitrators of young lives with sufficiently credible and deliverable strength to face them down whenever and wherever it is necessary. The alternative is to continue what we have been doing all along — a kind of social change where upon being given a dollar's worth of trust we have returned merely a handful of coins. It doesn't matter that we have always tried to return one dollar's worth. That is still — *small change!*

Youth Liberation Press • Materials for Organizers

Student and Youth Organizing

A 96-page book which discusses organizing young people in and out of school. It has chapters about issues to organize around, tactics to use, skills to know, problems that come up, and a bibliography. Actual incidents, illustrating the points being discussed, are described throughout the pamphlet.

Young People and the Law

This book includes sections on the First Amendment, the right to privacy, equal protection, corporal punishment, due process and other important subjects. It **compares** the legal situation of minors with that of adults to show them the major areas of discrimination. Landmark Supreme Court decisions, such as **Tinker v. Des Moines** and **in re Gault** are reprinted in the appendix so students can quote them to their principal.

High School Women's Liberation

A collection of over 20 articles about young women's liberation. Included in this 80-page book are discussions about the school scene, sexism in textbooks, sports, lesbianism, black women, sexuality, legal rights, sexism in language and music, and poetry by young women. There are also several book reviews and an article by a man about his experiences with sexism. This is the best resource for young women available today.

Youth Liberation: News, Politics and Survival Information

Some of the best articles from the early issues of FPS are collected in this paperback book, which was published by Times Change Press in 1972. It also contains the original Youth Liberation platform and personal statements from young people on the need to struggle for liberation.

Growing Up Gay

This 40-page booklet contains 20 articles by sensitive young women and men about the experience of being young and gay. Included are articles about accepting one's gayness, coming out and talking with parents. There is an extensive list of resources.

A complete list (including prices) is available from Youth Liberation, 2007 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104 (313) 995-4575.

A DISCUSSION OF THE ARGUMENTS

Should Young People Have Political Rights?

This article was originally written as a discussion document for the Human Rights Party, a political party in Michigan whose members held local office in several Michigan cities during the early 1970s. The Human Rights Party ran 14- and 15-year-old candidates for school board in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and took a case to the U.S. Supreme Court trying to get the underage candidates' names on the ballot. They lost the case, but one of the candidates received over 1300 write-in votes.

Wisdom Comes With Age

The youth movements of the 1960s helped destroy this myth. People never *really* believed it, did they? In *Cakes and Ale* Somerset Maugham says that when people become old they realize that they aren't wise, but then it serves their own interests to maintain the myth that wisdom comes with age.

Young People Will be Unduly Influenced by Parents and Peers

This strikes at the root of the problem: adults don't trust young people to make their own decisions, to have their own opinions, to make up their own minds. Each of us must know people who think that we have been unduly influenced — by rotten friends, television, college radicals, etc. We are influenced by our experiences. None of us enters the voting booth as a *tabula rasa*.

In fact, the whole problem of why parents do have such an influence is precisely because the young are powerless, are property of parents, are denied rights such as voting which could be used to free themselves of their oppression. This argument becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Similar arguments were used to justify denying blacks the vote ("They don't know what's best for them," — read "us") and denying women the vote.

Children Haven't Reached a Proper Developmental Stage

Everyone has reached a different developmental stage. Who is to say what is proper, what is the norm? All people develop at different rates. Everyone continues to alter their perceptions of reality as they live in a changing world. To say that people who don't have the 'proper' level of psychomotor or intellectual development shouldn't be allowed to vote is to deny the vote to physically and mentally 'handicapped' people.

Should mental patients, people with cerebral palsy or multiple sclerosis be denied the right to vote? If people want to vote and are capable of voting, who are adults to deny them that right? Who gives adults the sanction to extend or withhold that 'privilege'? It is because adults are in the position of power over young people that they hang on to their own prerogatives. Adults have no right denying rights to oppressed people because they think they aren't 'prepared' to vote — to vote *our way*, that is, to vote 'adult'. If the voting age was abolished each young person could decide for herself whether she had reached the 'proper' stage to vote.

Young People are Actually 'Different,' or a 'Special Case'

That's a familiar argument: blacks are different (read "inferior"), women are different (ditto), Jews are different (and ditto again). *If*

young people are a special case, it is precisely because they are denied meaningful participation in the society — denied the right to make the most fundamental decisions that affect their lives. (History is full of examples of how oppressed groups, such as slaves and Jews, became "childlike" in response to their oppression.) Yes, blacks are different — not because they are black, but because of their experience of oppression. And females are different, because all of their lives have been lived within a sexual caste system. But different from what? What is the 'norm' here? Why, *white adult males* of course. The same is true for gay people where straight is the norm.

The question is whether adults want to maintain this caste system which constrains and constricts full human development. The 'problem' is not with the youth but with the system — and one way to change *it* might be to give 'them' the right to vote. Giving young people the vote could be instrumental in changing relationships with adults/parents/oppressors.

To deny young people of any age the right to vote is to give them this message: You aren't as fully human as we [adults] are.

Just as there should be no age restriction on the right to vote, there should be no 'age of majority'. The age of majority — supposedly a protective statute — works in the same way as protective work laws which oppress women seeking employment. The actual protection is small; the discriminatory uses of the laws are widespread. We should all be familiar with the 'protection' hoaxes that oppressors perpetrate on the oppressed: the blacks had to be protected, females had to be protected — from what? In going about our ordinary human business we constantly protect other people from real dangers. Instead of an age of majority, there could be neighborhood groups (with legal counsel if necessary) which advise and protect people in regard to their rights, groups that look after everyone's interests. Unfair contracts would be voided. Agreements would of course meet standard minimum legal requirements and prohibitions regarding safety, hours, monies, discrimination, involuntary servitude, etc. Exploitation would be punishable by law.

Consider one example of eliminating age chauvinism: driving a car. If, at age ten, a person is demonstrably proficient as a driver, then she should be legally permitted to drive. The criteria should be desire and ability — not age.

Similarly, if people are able to vote and want to, they should have that right, regardless of age. If they need physical help, it should be provided, just as it is now for those people who are disabled. The voting apparatus is presently designed for "average"-sized adults (of course) and must be scaled down so that small people can use it and can feel that their needs are being considered — that they are a legitimate part of society.

Admittedly, giving young people full human and civil rights will make things more difficult — more difficult, that is, for those who comfortably hold on to their exclusive privileges, not more difficult for the youngest third of our population. It makes things tougher for the voting elite when more people are enfranchised. Dictatorships are always so neat and democracies are always so messy. We must decide if we're willing to pay the inconvenient price of justice. Whether we aid them or not, young people, sooner or later, will gain their freedom and those of us in the way may be run over.

The Myth of Childhood

Based on an article by Shulamith Firestone *Illustrated by Clive Offley.*

CHILDHOOD HAS ACQUIRED MYTHS OF EPIC PROPORTIONS. – MYTHS WHICH SATISFY THE NEEDS OF ADULTS RATHER THAN THOSE OF CHILDREN.

I ONCE PLAYED A GAME WITH A BOY 4 YRS OLD. I HUNG CHEWING GUM BY STRING FROM THE LOWER BOUGHS OF A TREE AND EXPLAINED...

... IT'S A CHEWING GUM TREE.

BUT WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENT FLAVOURS ON THE SAME TREE.

BECAUSE DIFFERENT STICKS RIPEN AT DIFFERENT TIMES.

AND EVEN THOUGH THE STICKS WERE COVERED WITH WRAPPING PAPER HE WILLINGLY ACCEPTED THE IDEA.

NEXT YEAR I REMINDED HIM OF IT.

DON'T MENTION THAT !

CHILDREN LIVE WITH AN UNPLEASANT SENSE OF THEIR OWN INADEQUACY – MADE DEPENDENT ON ADULTS FOR MONEY, FOOD AND KNOWLEDGE

THAT THEY ARE CAREFREE AND HAPPY IS LARGELY A MYTH THAT SATISFIES THE NEEDS OF ADULTS.

EVERYONE MUST HAVE AT LEAST ONE HAPPY PERIOD IN THEIR LIFE

IT'S NOT WHEN YOU'RE WORKING.

IT'S NOT IN OLD AGE

IT MUST HAVE BEEN WHEN WE WERE KIDS !

RIGID AGE SEGREGATION THROUGHOUT LIFE HELPS SUSTAIN THE MYTH OF IDYLLIC CHILDHOOD. IN EDUCATION FOR EXAMPLE...

WHOLE INDUSTRIES AND AN ARMY OF PROFESSIONALS REINFORCE THE IDEA THAT CHILDREN ARE A RACE APART.

AND CHILDREN THEMSELVES SOON LEARN THE RULES:

① THAT YOUTH IS AN AFFLICTION.

② THAT NAIVETY IS CONSIDERED CUTE AND THEY MIGHT AS WELL CASH IN ON IT.

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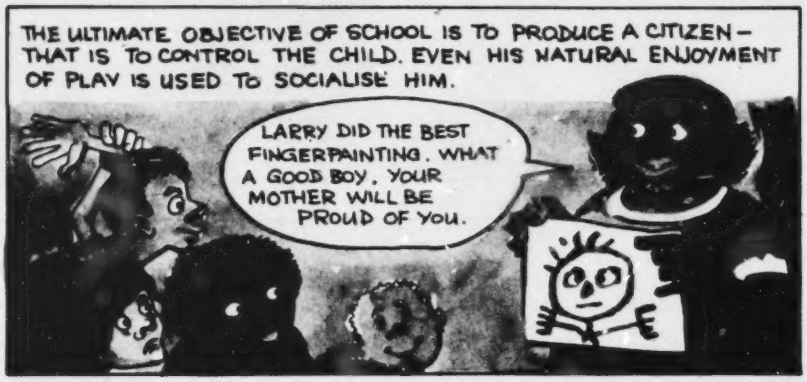
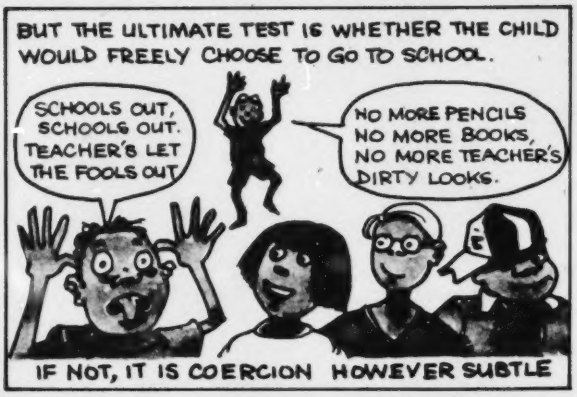
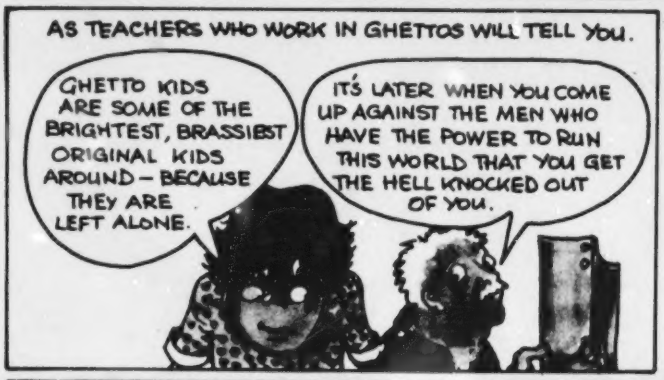
AS FOR THE FREEDOM OF CHILDHOOD THIS SEEMS TO IGNORE THE SIMPLE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH SCHOOLS ARE RUN.

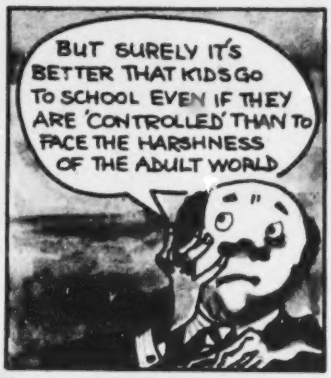

THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF SCHOOL IS TO PRODUCE A CITIZEN – THAT IS TO CONTROL THE CHILD. EVEN HIS NATURAL ENJOYMENT OF PLAY IS USED TO SOCIALISE HIM.
LARRY DID THE BEST FINGERPAINTING. WHAT A GOOD BOY. YOUR MOTHER WILL BE PROUD OF YOU.

THE BEST TEACHERS WILL OF COURSE TRY TO FIND THINGS THAT TRULY INTEREST THE CHILD.
IT'S EASIER TO KEEP THEM IN ORDER THAT WAY AT LEAST.


BUT THE ULTIMATE TEST IS WHETHER THE CHILD WOULD FREELY CHOOSE TO GO TO SCHOOL.
SCHOOLS OUT, SCHOOLS OUT. TEACHER'S LET THE FOOLS OUT
NO MORE PENCILS NO MORE BOOKS, NO MORE TEACHER'S DIRTY LOOKS.
IF NOT, IT IS COERCION HOWEVER SUBTLE

CHILDREN IN BIG CITY GHETTOS OFTEN LIVE IN MORE OPEN COMMUNITIES.
AUNTS, STEPFATHERS, COUSINS. FAMILIES ARE MORE LOOSELY ORGANISED.
NOBODY TAKES TOO MUCH NOTICE OF INDIVIDUAL KIDS.
SO WE CAN GET TOGETHER IN GANGS.
WE WANDER ALL OVER THE PLACE.
AND HAVE A GOOD TIME.
NOT SURPRISINGLY IN SCHOOL THEY ARE WILD AND UNRULY.


AS TEACHERS WHO WORK IN GHETTOS WILL TELL YOU.
GHETTO KIDS ARE SOME OF THE BRIGHTEST, BRASSIEST ORIGINAL KIDS AROUND – BECAUSE THEY ARE LEFT ALONE.
IT'S LATER WHEN YOU COME UP AGAINST THE MEN WHO HAVE THE POWER TO RUN THIS WORLD THAT YOU GET THE HELL KNOCKED OUT OF YOU.


BUT SURELY IT'S BETTER THAT KIDS GO TO SCHOOL EVEN IF THEY ARE 'CONTROLLED' THAN TO FACE THE HARSHNESS OF THE ADULT WORLD.

INSTEAD OF PROTESTING THAT KIDS ARE BEING EXPLOITED JUST LIKE ADULTS.
YOU SHOULD ASK WHY EVEN ADULTS ARE BEING USED IN THIS WAY.
LET'S TALK ABOUT REMOVING SOME OF THE HORRORS OF ADULT LIFE RATHER THAN JUST GIVING KIDS TEMPORARY ARTIFICIAL PROTECTION FROM THEM.

by Jo Lynn Connelly

The Case for Child Advocacy

WHY SHOULD YOU WANT TO BE A CHILD ADVOCATE?

PARENTS EXERT TREMENDOUS INFLUENCE OVER THEIR CHILDREN.

Research: In one study, questionnaires were sent to college students asking about their adolescent years. The responses indicated that adolescent rebellion is related to marital happiness, the restrictiveness-permissiveness of child-rearing practices, and the division of authority. In families where authority is patriarchal, the marriage is likely to be unhappy and the child-rearing practices tend to be very restrictive or very permissive. There is likely to be more adolescent rebellion. The authors suggest this is due to built-up frustration which develops into aggression.

(Balswick, Jack O. and Clintos Macrides, "Parental Stimulus for Adolescent Rebellion," *Adolescence*, 1975, 10, 38, Sum., 253-266.)

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In another study, researchers gave out questionnaires to 16- and 17-year-olds. They found a strong connection between the youths' self-evaluation and specific types of parental behavior. The amount of emotional support that parents give their child positively correlates with a good self-evaluation — in terms of the child's feelings of personal power and self-worth.

(Gecas, Viktor, "Parental Behavior and Dimensions of Adolescent Self-Evaluation," *Sociometry*, 1971, 34, 4, Dec., 466-482).

The advocate should keep in mind when working with a child that not only have her parents exerted a considerable amount of influence over her in the past, but also that any efforts to help the child change must include the parents for the change to be long-lasting.

FAMILIES OFTEN HAVE POOR COMMUNICATION.

Research: Parents and children were surveyed as to their attitudes on many contemporary issues. They were asked what their own attitudes were on the issues and what the others' attitudes were. For example, parents gave their viewpoint on an issue and then said what they thought their children's viewpoint was. There was significant disagreement. Parents underrated the differences between theirs and their children's attitudes and the children overrated the differences.

(Lerner, Richard M. and John R. Knapp, "Actual and Perceived Intrafamilial Attitudes of Late Adolescents and their Parents," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 1975, 4, 1, March, 17-36).

The advocate in a family counseling session could help make sure the child is understood. This could be accomplished by making sure the other family members actually hear what the child is saying.

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SERIOUS CHILD ABUSE IS ALL TOO COMMON. MOST PARENTS USE SOME FORM OF PHYSICAL AGGRESSION TO DISCIPLINE THEIR CHILDREN.

Research: Seventy-eight people aged 18-30 completed questionnaires on their upbringing and answered questions about how they were disciplined. Physical aggression was used by 70% of the parents; verbal aggression was used in nearly all of the families. The author suggests that a fine line exists between discipline and abuse, and notes that physical aggression is so prevalent in families that children often turn anger into aggression later in life.

(Steinmetz, Suzanne K., "The Use of Force for Resolving Family Conflict: The Training Ground for Abuse," *The Family Coordinator*, 1977, 26, 1, Jan. 19-26.)

The advocate should be aware of the physical power that parents have over their children, a power which often prevents children from voicing their concerns. This is one reason why children should be advocated for in the family counseling situation. When physical punishment becomes extreme, the legal and moral rights of children as human beings should be advocated for.

CHILDREN ALSO HAVE LITTLE POWER OR INFLUENCE IN THE FAMILY.

Research: Researchers found a positive correlation between talking time and successful interruptions, decision-making and attribution of power. In the families observed, children spoke less often and were interrupted more frequently, made fewer decisions and hence were relatively powerless.

(Hadley, Trevor R. and Theodore Jacob, "The Measurement of Family Power: A Methodological Study," *Sociometry*, 1976, 39, 4, Dec., 384-395).

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In a similar study, families with boys either 11 or 16 years old were observed. This author (one of the co-authors of the previous study) assessed dominance and conflict patterns in the family by process, (including talking time and interruptions — both attempted and successful) and outcome measures. He found that both socio-economic status and the age of the child were found to be associated. The 11-year-olds were found to have less family influence than the 16-year-olds, who also had relatively little influence.

(Jacob, Theodore, "Patterns of Family Conflict and Dominance as a Function of Child Age and Social Class," *Developmental Psychology*, 1974, 10, 1, Jan., 1-12).

The advocate should keep in mind the relative powerlessness of a child even in average or "typical" families. The interests, concerns and feelings of the child should be advocated for in the family counseling session, first by drawing them out of the child, and then by drawing attention to them. Also, the concerns of the child should be discussed seriously as important issues and brought up as such by the advocate if need be, when compromises and contracts are being worked out. The advocate's voice added to the child's can help to temporarily increase the child's influence.

THAT'S SMALL SCALE — WHAT ABOUT OUTSIDE THE FAMILY?

SCHOOLS PLAY AN IMPORTANT AND INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN.

Research: An ongoing cohort study of 284 adolescent males in the Pacific Northwest discovered many interesting correlations. First, adult success was linked to their previous school success; school success was linked to family

status characteristics; and school status and socio-economic status independently affect delinquent and adult careers. Whether the child becomes successful or not is partially dependent upon school and delinquency labels.

(Polk, Kenneth, "Schools and the Delinquency Experience," *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 1975, 2, 4, Dec., 315-338).

The advocate should realize that since schools exert such a tremendous influence on children that advocacy efforts to challenge unfair or unjustified labeling, for example, are necessary and important in the schools.

WHEN SHOULD YOU ADVOCATE IN SCHOOLS?

WHEN SCHOOLS PRACTICE TRACKING.

Research: Adolescents were surveyed and asked about previous delinquent experience. These self-reported delinquency statistics were then correlated with many different variables, and it was found that the child's track position was the best predictor of self-reported delinquency. The author was surprised to find that it was a better predictor than socio-economic status.

(Kelly, Delos H., "Status Origins, Track Position, and Delinquent Involvement: A Self-Report Analysis," *The Sociological Quarterly*, 1975, 16, 2, Spring, 264-271).

The advocate should challenge the practice of tracking in general and should advocate for individual children in particular, especially in prejudiced or rigid tracking cases. For example, a child who wants to get out of a certain track could be advocated for so that the system will allow this change.

SCHOOLS ALSO PERPETUATE CLASS STATUS AND STIGMA, OFTEN TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF WORKING-CLASS CHILDREN.

Research: Three classrooms in Ottawa were systematically observed 18 times for half-hour sessions. The researcher found that in teacher-centered classrooms, there were significantly fewer teacher interactions with working-class children. One of the classrooms, one that was child-centered by having the children themselves run the class, had more teacher interaction with working-class children.

(Richer, Stephen, "Research Note: Middle-Class Bias of Schools — Fact or Fancy,?" *Sociology of Education*, 1974, 47, 4, Fall, 523, 534.)

The advocate should realize that in the U.S. there are few child-centered classrooms. Therefore, in most classrooms, especially in elementary schools, classism probably exists. The advocate should keep this in mind when working with "problem" children, especially in cases of attention-getting "bad" behavior. Teachers could then be made aware of this phenomenon to help them work with the child and the advocate.

BECAUSE OF THE PUNITIVE ATMOSPHERE OF MOST SCHOOLS MANY CHILDREN FIND EDUCATION UNSATISFYING.

Research: Using survey-type research, high school-, college- and graduate-level students were asked about their satisfaction with their education and the degree of reliance on punishment at their schools. Graduate students reported both a high level of satisfaction and a low degree of punishment; college students expressed both a mixed level of satisfaction and a

mixed degree of punishment; and high school students reported a very low level of satisfaction and a very high degree of punishment. Both high school and college students said they'd be more satisfied with their education if the reliance on punishment was decreased.

(Jamieson, David W. and Kenneth W. Thomas, "Power and Conflict in the Student-Teacher Relationship," *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 1974, 10, 3, 321-336).

The advocate should advocate for the child when the child is being punished, whether it be by reprimand, detention or suspension. In high schools the teacher's word is taken over the student's word and since the child is relatively powerless (when her parents aren't involved), the advocate can help to insure that unjust punishment isn't handed out.

SCHOOLS NOT ONLY CAUSE DISSATISFACTION IN STUDENTS BUT THEY CONTRIBUTE TO THE RUNAWAY AND DELINQUENCY STATISTICS.

Research. The researcher found that attitudes toward school were inversely related to running away. Runaways often attributed their leaving to school and school problems, and a negative school attitude correlated with running away. The researcher also found a high correlation between runaway and delinquency statistics and hypothesized that if our education system could be reformed, the incidence of running away and delinquency would decrease.

(Hildebrand, James A., "Reasons for Runaways," *Crime and Delinquency*, 1968, 14, 1, Jan., 42-48.)

The advocate should help the runaway show "just cause" in running by pointing to specific school problems. Thus the advocate can challenge the status offense charge of running away, or at least lessen the punishment.

ADVOCACY IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM — POLICE

POLICE HAVE PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS OF WHAT A DELINQUENT IS LIKE. THEY TEND TO WATCH SELECTIVELY AND APPREHEND WORKING-CLASS KIDS, AND TO HARASS CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN.

Research. Police were surveyed in one study as to their images of delinquency, their estimates of involvement from the different social classes, and their predictions of later delinquent careers of individuals, after one official contact. Their answers were obtained both by questionnaires and structured interviews. There was a six-year followup on the children the police had named as being probable criminals. Lower-class children did turn out to have a higher later incidence of delinquency, but they were significantly in error about individual children.

(Garrett, Marcia and James F. Short, Jr., "Social Class and Delinquency: Predictions and Outcomes of Police-Juvenile Encounters," *Social Problems*, 1975, 22, 3, Feb., 368-383.

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In another study, where participant observation was used, an adolescent delinquent gang and their interactions with the police were studied. The children's hostility was directed more at the way the policing was carried out and not at the law enforcement role. The gang members resented the perceived deceitfulness of the police in their interaction with arrested offenders, their violence, their hypercritical attitudes towards minor offenses such as drinking, and felt that the police were often misinformed about incidents.

(Smith, Greg, "Kids, Cops, and Conflict: A Participant-Observation Study," *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 1975, 11, 1 Feb. 21-27).

The advocate should be aware that lower-class children are caught more frequently and that police are usually wrong in their predictions of delinquency for certain children. Thus, classism and possibly racism affect police arrests. One should advocate also in cases where individual children are being selectively harassed, or where the rights of the children involved were violated.

ADVOCACY IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM — THE COURTS

CHILDREN'S LEGAL RIGHTS ARE TENUOUS AT BEST AND ARE OFTEN IGNORED OR NONEXISTENT.

Research: In this study, the role of the defense counsel in the juvenile court was examined, as perceived by other participants in the system. This Metro Juvenile Court had been using legal representation for five years. Structured interviews were held with seven judges and 26 probation officers and social workers to find out what they felt about three areas: the importance of legal representation for children, the prosecutor's role and the appropriateness of due process proceedings for juvenile offenders.

There was some qualified support for procedural legal rights, but three rights that were frequently opposed were: the inadmissibility of hearsay evidence, the protection against self-incrimination, and incredibly, the actual representation by legal counsel.

(Erickson, Patricia G., "The Defense Lawyer's Role in Juvenile Court: An Empirical Investigation into Judges' and Social Workers' Points of View," *University of Toronto Law Journal*, 1974, 24, 2, Spring, 126-148.)

The advocate should make sure that rights already given to children are not abused and advocate for individuals when they are. Also, children still lack many of the basic rights that white male adults have had since the Constitution was signed. The advocate should press for these legal rights to include children as well. The advocate should be aware that not only may she run up against public opposition, but may also be faced with the opposition of the "helpers" already in the system.

ONCE A CHILD HAS BEEN INCARCERATED SHE IS LABELED AS A DELINQUENT AND HER SELF-ESTEEM DROPS CONSIDERABLY.

Research: All 236 boys in the Indiana Boys School were given the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale. It was found that there was a significant drop in a boy's self-concept after he'd been incarcerated for the first time. Those who had been in before start with lowered esteem but don't drop any further. The author concludes that incarceration for the first time does affect children's self-esteem. It is not known how long this effect lasts.

(Culbertson, Robert G., "The Effect of Institutionalization on the Delinquent Inmate's Self-Concept," *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 1975, 66, 1, March, 88-93.)

The advocate should push for full legal rights for children. The more rights children have the less likely it is they will be victimized by the juvenile justice system. If hearsay evidence is admitted in a juvenile trial, for example, the child is receiving unjust treatment and may be unfairly imprisoned. Also the child whose self-esteem has been damaged by the system may be more likely to continue in anti-social behavior.

by Keith Hefner

A SHORT HISTORY OF ANN ARBOR YOUTH LIBERATION

Adult Support Made a Difference

When David Kaimowitz was 9 years old he ran away from home, as did half a million other kids in 1968. Like most other young people David was soon returned home. But *unlike* most other young people, he had parents who were politically active in some of the leftist movements of the sixties. David had always been taught that all people should be equal and that he would be too — when he was older. But David didn't want to wait. He ran away again, went home again, left again and finally ended up in Ann Arbor, Michigan. That time, instead of forcing David to return to New York City, his parents followed him to Ann Arbor. His dad got a job in Detroit and a democratic decision-making process was set up in the Kaimowitz family that included the kids.

PUBLISHING A NEWSPAPER

About the time the Kaimowitz family moved to Ann Arbor, a group of junior and senior high school students were publishing *Venceremos*, an underground newspaper on which David later became a staff member. Though *Venceremos* was a high school underground paper, it reported many issues of the day, including student rights, police repression, women's liberation, the Black Panthers, and the war in Southeast Asia. One of the staff members had even been to Cuba. At that time, though, the staff had only a dim awareness of oppression based on age. We were far more concerned with racism, sexism, and U.S. imperialism, and even took the name "*Venceremos*" from the Cuban revolution, where it was used as a slogan meaning "we will win."

However, it was through work on the newspaper that we became conscious of oppression based on age. Due to our experience in other liberation struggles we knew that many of the problems oppressed people face are the result of discrimination, rather than their own inferiority or shortcomings. But it still didn't dawn on us that we too were oppressed. We believed that most of our problems were of our own doing; we had been thoroughly indoctrinated with the myth that young people are inferior to adults, and we thought it was our fault that we couldn't adjust to school and family. It was through a process of organizing and publishing that we overcame our doubts and gained the self-confidence necessary to struggle against our oppression as young people.

The first step in that process was organizing around student rights. Most of us disliked school, yet we were forced to attend by compulsory attendance laws and parents. Since we had to go, the obvious thing to do was to try to improve school so that it wouldn't be so unpleasant. That took organizing. We soon learned, however, that the essential organizing tools of freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and most of the other rights didn't apply to students. The school administrators often tried to prevent distribution of *Venceremos* or to disrupt student rights meetings. But we still didn't see the link between student oppression and oppression of young people in general. That was to come with more experience.

SEEDS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

We faced many problems while trying to

This article is by no means a complete history of Youth Liberation Press. It is a sketch which highlights the participation of adults in the organization.

complete each issue of *Venceremos*. We couldn't get everyone together who wanted to work on it because they lived all over the city, and only a few of us had driver's licenses. For those who had licenses it was difficult to convince parents to let us use a car for chauffering friends to an underground newspaper meeting. On top of that, many students who could get to meetings, by bus or bike or whatever, weren't allowed to come when their parents found out out what was going on.

Other parental restrictions caused other problems. We couldn't have our meetings after school because many young people had obligations, but we couldn't have them in the evening because most of us had to be home so early that the meetings would have been impossibly short.

Eventually the small group that managed to meet somewhat regularly took responsibility for publishing. Then we ran into even bigger problems. We were all too young for decent jobs, so we could barely scrape together the money for paper. We didn't have access to typewriters or printing equipment. We had to find space to collate each issue and a car to deliver copies to all the students involved in distribution.

During this time period we were all having experiences which nudged us toward an understanding of the need for youth liberation. Many of us socialized together when we weren't working on the newspaper. Sometimes we attended concerts which ended after curfew; often we would be arrested or picked up and warned on the way home. Also, tensions which developed around the paper, such as staying out late, were beginning to make life at home unbearable for some staff members. As these experiences piled on top of one another we began to realize that our age alone was a source of oppression. Some of us were black; some of us were poor; some of us were female; and some of us were gay. We understood and resented the oppression we faced because of those qualities. But all of us were young and all of us were beginning to feel that particular oppression more acutely.

Naturally, we still felt that the other struggles were important, and we still talked about them and wrote about them in our newspaper. But because we now realized the tremendous effect ageism had on our lives we began to concentrate more on the oppression faced by young people. We changed the name of our newspaper to *Youth Rising*; we began for the first time to talk about calling our group Youth Liberation; and we all began making those psychological connections, those flashes of insight, that our problems stemmed more from a *system* that oppressed us rather than from our personal shortcomings or a particular incompetency afflicting only people under 18.

> "David had always been taught that all people should be equal and that he would be too, when he was older. But David didn't want to wait. He ran away, and his family followed him to Michigan."

As we started thinking and talking about ageism we soon discovered that we weren't the only ones who had discovered it. There were nascent young people's liberation groups in half a dozen cities around the country — and even some overseas. And every month we would hear about a new "Kid's Lib" group springing up somewhere. Soon "Kid's Lib" even became a fad and a device used to sell bubble gum and Sunday comics.

YOUTH LIBERATION IS BORN

Of all the organizations we ever heard about, ours is the only one that has lasted throughout the 1970s. Out of the thousands of high school underground newspapers that have been published, and the tens of thousands of young people involved in various types of organizing — out of all those people only a handful ever got involved in *sustained* organizing around the issue of young people's liberation. And only in Ann Arbor did the movement flourish. There are several identifiable reasons why we were successful in Ann Arbor. It wasn't chance. Interestingly, one of the crucial factors was adult support. Those reasons will be discussed later in this article because they are helpful for adults who are sympathetic but wonder, "What

can I do? How can I give meaningful help?"

As has been mentioned, Youth Liberation grew out of a small group of people publishing a high school underground newspaper called *Venceremos*. The paper began at a junior high during the 1969-70 school year. Its distribution was limited to that school until September, 1970, when students from most of the secondary schools met and decided to expand distribution. Several issues were published in the first few months of that school year. Then on December 4th, a group of us went to Washington, D.C. for the Black Panther Constitutional Convention, at which we hoped to meet other high school students invoived in liberation struggles. The convention was unorganized due to the tremendous police repression of the Panthers at that time, so we had a lot of time to talk with other young people from around the country and to talk among ourselves. That's when we first began to realize that we all felt many of the same problems with schools, parents, the police and adult authorities; and that none of the groups at the Convention or anywhere else were concerned with young people's oppression.

"Surprisingly, one of the most important factors in the success of Youth Liberation was adult assistance. There was little we could do without a place to meet, mimeograph paper and some moral support from adults around us."

A few weeks after the Convention, David Kaimowitz and Chuck Ream, an education student and the only adult actively working with our group, sat down and wrote a 10-point "Youth Liberation Platform." They presented it to a *Venceremos* meeting and everyone had suggestions and changes they wanted to make. The platform was to go through many revisions before a group of twelve of us, nearly a year later during a sequestered weekend at a farm, were to rewrite it word by word into a 15-point platform that addressed most of our concerns about oppression of young people and other people in the world. Though the platform was rhetorical in places, it was and still is a good manifesto for the rights of young people. It called for the right to self-determination for young people, full civil rights, the right to a voice in our education and the need for alternatives to traditional families, as well as broader social and political goals.

INCREASING LOCAL AND AND NATIONAL ACTIVITY

In the meantime we continued publishing and began to branch out into other activities. In the spring of 1971 we convinced the city of Ann Arbor to drop its curfew ordinance. We held several demonstrations, including one in which a group of us stood in a sympathetic parent's front yard while someone called the police to report that kids were out after curfew. The police were sure surprised when they found out we were in our own front yard!

In the summer of 1971 we joined forces with *FPS*, a new national magazine for high school students published from Washington, D.C. *FPS* moved its offices to Ann Arbor and became part of Youth Liberation. We changed the name slightly to *FFS: a magazine of young people's liberation* and have published in Ann Arbor for nearly eight years.

During the 1971-72 school year, we increased our activities greatly. We distributed thousands of copies of *Youth Rising*; we formed student unions in the high schools and junior highs; we demanded and won the right to have meetings during school hours. In the spring of 1972, we ran 15-year-old Sonia Yaco for school board on the Human Rights Party ticket, and she received over 1300 write-in votes (the courts had ruled that her name could not appear on the ballot). The next year we ran 14-year-old Larry Mann. Both Larry and Sonia waged effective, articulate campaigns for student rights, for an end to tracking, for student representation on the school board and on other issues. Just the fact that they were running at all struck down some ageist misconceptions about young people's capabilities.

In 1973, the school board tried to crush the student movement with a repressive discipline policy. To fight back, we set up pickets at one junior high and convinced half the students to stay out on the first day. But the board wouldn't

relent and the student movement began to lose momentum. The discipline policy eventually went through, and most organizing slowly ground to a halt. We published only 4 issues of *Youth Rising* in the 1972-73 school year and none since.

In 1973 we began to concentrate our efforts on publishing materials with a nationwide circulation. We began to collect our organizing experiences on paper, and the result was a series of pamphlets including: *How to Start a High School Underground Newspaper, Student and Youth Organizing, Young People and the Law, High School Women's Liberation, Growing Up Gay* and several others. When local organizing picks up we are always ready to help out, and have assisted on two subsequent underground papers and numerous other projects.

WHY ANN ARBOR?

Why did so much activity occur around young people's liberation in Ann Arbor? Why aren't there youth liberation organizations all over the country? After all, young people face extremely similar oppression practically everywhere; and, in many respects, their responses have been similar — publishing, organizing, running away, etc.

The college student movement at the University of Michigan helped somewhat, but many universities were centers of student activism. Though some of us were associated with the University through parents or activities, most weren't.

Surprisingly, one of the most important factors in Youth Liberation's success was adult assistance. To anyone familiar with student organizing it is easy to see that young people don't have much power; and, as much as they hate that situation, there is little they can do without a place to meet, some money for mimeograph paper, and some psychological encouragement from adults. Listed here are some of the ways that parents and other concerned adults lent us a hand.

> "We began to realize that our age alone was a source of oppression. Some of us were black, some of us were poor, some of us were female, and some were gay. But all of us were young and were beginning to feel that oppression more and more acutely."

CONCRETE SUPPORT FROM PARENTS

☐ The first *Venceremos* office was in the basement of a supportive parent's house. *FPS* was published out of another parent's attic and, when the attic got too small, a larger space was found in still another parent's basement.

☐ A mother who made her living as an editor let us type our paper on her IBM typewriter. When her government funded project ended she managed to have four hundred reams of leftover paper sent our way. Chuck Ream bought a used mimeograph machine for us. Prior to that we printed at night at a parent's office.

☐ Several young people who worked with Youth Liberation were finding life with their parents intolerable. They didn't want to run away to another city because all of their friends lived in Ann Arbor. The problem was alleviated when adults we knew volunteered as foster parents; and some parents simply let another young person move into their house so they didn't have to live at home.

☐ If we had to miss school to finish an issue, our parents thought nothing about writing an excuse saying we had been sick.

☐ When an administrator slugged one of our members, a lawyer volunteered free legal assistance.

☐ If we needed a car at 2 a.m. to transport the next issue to all the distributors, we could usually get one.

☐ It would have been difficult to have our newspaper meetings if we hadn't had a living room to meet in. We could never have found the uninterrupted time to work out the Youth Liberation Platform if we hadn't been allowed to use one family's country house for a weekend social and political retreat.

MORAL SUPPORT TOO

Perhaps even more important than the tangible resources provided by parents and other adults was the example that they set. Their support was seldom given begrudgingly. Many of us knew that our parents supported us and were willing to stick up for us when we got suspended or arrested. Even if our own parents didn't, we knew that there were *some* adults in the community who would help us out.

Most young organizers have to fight their parents as well as the schools and the law. Even parents and other adults who claim to be sympathetic often "don't want to get involved." And all too often adults who do try to help are paternalistic and moralistic. It was the existence and support of a few adults who sincerely agreed with our right to organize that made the difference between the "flash in the pan" organizing that happened in most cities and the sustained work that we were able to do in Ann Arbor.

Though many adults provided various kinds of support, they were a tiny minority. There was a clear distinction between the concrete support we got from some parents and the lip-service or outright hostility we got from most. Practical support included things like use of parents' homes, access to automobiles and printing equipment, free paper, lawyers, excuses for missing school and shelter for kids who could no longer put up with their parents. Adults who gave that kind of support put themselves on the line. They faced pressure from the schools and *their* peers. They were willing to risk a lot for their and other people's children. Their actions were worth more than a thousand words from parents who didn't do anything but talk.

This doesn't mean that the supportive adults agreed with everything we did or said. They often didn't. But they were honest about their disagreements and didn't prevent us from going our way even if they thought it was a mistake. The only point we always agreed on was that we had the right to organize the way we judged most effective.

> "In retrospect, the examples set by parents was especially important. Their support was seldom given begrudgingly. Many were willing to stick up for us even when we got suspended or arrested. They put themselves on the line. They faced pressure from their peers."

By highlighting the support given by parents I don't want to slight the achievements of the young people who were doing the work. Our results are ample evidence that we were willing to sacrifice and struggle for our freedom, and that we were militant and skilled. If it wasn't for all our willingness to fight nothing would have happened at all no matter what the parents or other adults thought. But once we were roused, the generous assistance we received from adults was invaluable.

by Keith Hefner

HOW TO USE YOUTH LIBERATION MATERIALS

A Guide for Teachers and Workshop Leaders

The five handbooks in this section are all published by Youth Liberation Press. Only four handbooks are provided with this book when it is purchased as part of the Teaching and Workshop Kit. Therefore, if you have ordered the kit you may not have one of the handbooks mentioned here.

Please note that a flexible approach to the following material is essential for those planning to lead workshops or use it in teaching. Some questions and activities recommended here may be inappropriate or impractical in some instances. Also, there are many more questions and activities than could ever be covered in a typical class period or seminar. Presenters should pick and choose activities that they feel most suit their particular purposes.

STUDENT AND YOUTH ORGANIZING

HANDBOOK SYNOPSIS

The only way students will get their rights, and a significant say in school policy will be through organizing. Despite the good intentions of some teachers, administrators and advocates, as a group they will never be a major force for student rights. Only determined, well-organized, and militant students have the desire **and** the power to radically change the system to their advantage.

Unfortunately, the effects of ageism become magnified when students try to organize. Students are still under the legal control of their parents, who may not want them fighting for their rights at school. Students don't have the large amounts of money that are practically essential in organizing. Students don't have experience. They have been isolated from the real world; they've never been able to test themselves under real-life conditions. Few students have ever had the opportunity to set goals, fight for them, experience setbacks, reassess and fight some more. Student organizers face the dual problem of overcoming their inexperience and struggling around the issues. Most students never conquer the first problem.

By the time an organizer knows the lines of authority at school, who is likely to be on her side, and who against, how much support is necessary before presenting demands, how to recognize a runaround, and how to write and print a leaflet, she has graduated.

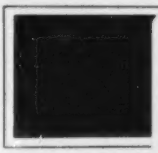
Student and Youth Organizing is designed to help students gain experience through study that they would otherwise have had to learn through mistakes. It was written by Youth Liberation in conjunction with some of the best student organizers in the country.

The handbook begins with a chapter on how to select issues. Some demands will be supported by the majority of students while some, usually more radical, may not receive much support at first. The handbook urges that the more unpopular demands be put forth with equal fervor. The demands can be linked by the issue of student self-determination. For example, an end to the dress code and an end to tracking are both related to the students' right to self-determination, though the former is an issue which will be understood and supported by most of the students while the latter will require some education work by organizers.

The next chapter lists dozens of issues and briefly discusses how they can be used in organizing. Included are: ageism as it relates to curfews, store policies, schools and the community in general; democracy in the schools as it relates to rules, student representation, due process, a student Bill of Rights, freedom of expression, dress codes and smoking; working with school staff on such issues as hiring, student evaluations, counseling, class discrimination, particularly as it involves tracking, racism, how it works and how to fight it; sexism, including discrimination against gay students; school resources and services that students can affect or establish, such as student centers, open campus, and cafeteria services; who controls the schools in the classroom and in the society; grades, sports, and other issues.

Once students have decided what issues to fight for, they have to plan their strategy. This is what the next chapter covers. It has specific suggestions on procedures and has examples from other organizing drives.

After a strategy has been adopted, the organizers need to decide which tactics will make their strategy successful. One chapter discusses various tactics, such as building a mass base, threatening people in



"Student organizers face two problems--overcoming their inexperience and struggling around the issues. Most never conquer the first problem."

power, appealing to the good will of authorities, and disruption. It also has several examples of how other students put their strategy into practice and shows why they succeeded or failed. There is information about how to plan a demonstration, put out a leaflet, arrange a speaker, run a candidate for school board, file a grievance, find a friendly administrator, call for a referendum, set up a picket line, etc.

Any organizer who has gotten this far isn't working alone. They are part of an organization, and organizations create their own internal problems. One chapter discusses how to run a meeting, get new people involved, choose priorities, form coalitions, and evaluate the group's progress.

Next is a chapter detailing the various skills an organizer must learn, such as fundraising, mimeographing, interviewing, research, negotiations, using the media, role playing, and obtaining a lawyer.

Finally, there are certain problems that seem to crop up in most student organizing efforts, and this chapter identifies and gives suggestions for avoiding them. Among the problems discussed are: cooptation, outright repression, apathy, graduation of organizers, political differences, race and class divisions among the students, free schools, and personal problems.

Ending the pamphlet is a bibliography of books about organizing and young people's liberation.

WORKSHOP: STUDENT AND YOUTH ORGANIZING

Goals: To get participants to see that the process of organizing is actually a series of small steps: 1) identifying all possible issues; 2) selecting certain issues to focus on; 3) planning a strategy; 4) choosing tactics; 5) winning or losing; 6) continuing the struggle.

Instructions: Read the handbook and the synopsis. Decide whether the participants will benefit more from an overview of the organizing process or specific discussions about certain aspects of organizing, e.g., choosing issues, or planning strategy. Since organizing is very complex, success often hinges on the suppleness of the organizers' strategy, not on mechanical application of formulas. The handbook shouldn't be interpreted dogmatically. The presenter, especially when talking to a group of students involved in or interested in organizing, should gather as much information as possible about the local situation so that she can tailor the presentation to local conditions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Selecting Issues: How can the organizer decide what demands to fight for? What are local young people concerned about? How do all the demands relate to self-determination for students and young people? Why should smaller, broad-based demands be tied to more important but less popular demands? How can a questionnaire help in formulating demands?

The questionnaire (see **Student and Youth Organizing**, page 50) could be used as the basis of a speech/workshop. The presenter could draw one up with, say 10 issues, and ask the participants to rate their importance. It would only take a few minutes to tabulate them and see what the participants were most concerned about. The rest of the discussion could center around those demands.

Possible Issues: How important (to the participants) are the issues listed? Pick the ones that are most important and give some background on them; e.g., if they are concerned about ageism, share with them the statistics about age discrimination in employment practices. In general, the presenter could try to get participants talking about those issues and use the information in the pamphlet to help direct the discussion. Or, if the participants don't express an interest, the presenter can summarize the issues and then attempt to get participants discussing the relative merits of the different issues.

Choosing and Planning Strategies: Many organizing efforts fail because of faulty (or no) strategy. What strategies would work in your area? How can students avoid the runaround if they have a prepared strategy? Presenters could give the example of "Dennis" (see **Student and Youth Organizing,** page 6) and point out the problems with his approach. Use some of the examples for planning good and bad strategy. Write them on the board or have them dittoed and ready to pass out. Explain and stress the importance of brainstorming. Give the example of "Susan and Linda" to show how a successful organizing drive was accomplished. (See **Student and Youth Organizing**, page 12)

Tactics: What are the four families of tactics mentioned in the pamphlet? How does an organizer decide which tactics will succeed? What are specific examples of each kind of tactic? Give the examples to help explain the various tactics. How can leaflets be used in organizing? What mistakes are commonly made in producing a leaflet? When should a referendum be used? What are the advantages and disadvantages of running students for school board?

What are the implications of going outside "proper channels" to demonstrate a point? What tactics are commonly used when "proper channels" are dammed up (picketing, guerilla theater, demonstrations, legal action)? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each type of action? Presenters can give some of the examples used in the handbook to

help explain the various tactics and their uses.

What are some of the implications of going outside "proper channels"? Do the participants think authorities have the best interests of young people and students at heart? Will petitions persuade authorities that demands are just? Are grievances an effective way to make change? Do the participants have a grievance system at their school? Are some teachers or youth advocates supportive enough of student rights that they can be trusted and worked with?

Organization: What kinds of problems seem inevitable in organizations (a small group of people doing all the work, lack of democracy, "in" groups and "out" groups, boring meetings, lack of direction)? How are problems different for large, mass-based groups and smaller, action-oriented ones? What precautions can be taken to avoid all of the above-mentioned problems? Presenters can use examples in the handbook to illustrate the problems.

Skills: What skills are necessary for organizing (fund-raising, writing, mimeographing, speaking, interviewing, research, negotiation, working with the media, etc.)? How can young people learn those skills?

Presenters shouldn't only list the skills necessary. They should explain what is involved in each skill, based on their own experience, and talk about how one goes about acquiring that skill.

Problems: What problems always seem to occur in young people's organizing? What steps can be taken to avoid them? Again, the pamphlet is thorough in this area. The presenters can list the problems or elicit them from the participants, depending on how sharp they are, and can elaborate on them and suggest solutions.

UNFAIR TO YOUNG PEOPLE

HANDBOOK SYNOPSIS

Unfair to Young People, by Bob Peterson, gives a historical backdrop to the current problems in the public schools. Peterson examines what happened over the last hundred years to show that today's problems are an integral part of the overall design and function of public education. Peterson's concern with the history of education is by no means academic; he has been a student organizer since the late sixties, and uses history as a tool to better understand the present. His basic arguments are outlined here.

To anyone who cares to look, something is drastically wrong with American public schools. They are boring, they stifle one's imagination, and they demand complete obedience. They are models of totalitarianism. Besides that, they don't even do a good job of teaching. Many students still drop out, and a large percentage of those who graduate can't read well enough to fill out a job application.

But why are the schools that way and why are they so hard to change? An understanding of what's wrong is the first step towards change.

Schools are usually boring and undemocratic, but they are not that way by mistake. Schools are preparing students for a life at boring and undemocratic jobs. If schools were exciting and taught students to be critical thinkers, students and society would face a crisis of unfulfilled expectations when graduates hit the job market.

Unfortunately most of us still learn and believe that schools are designed to help industrious people get ahead and to educate the masses for democracy, and that if we could only get schools back on track everything would be fine. Peterson shows that idea to be a carefully constructed myth, and contends that the real function of school is to train students to accept a rotten society.

The pamphlet is divided into three main sections. In the first the author reviews the history of schooling and the forces that shaped its growth. In the second section he discusses current methods of indoctrination and the role of schools today. Finally he takes a brief look at what the future can be like if the schools and society are radically changed.

Early Schooling: Until a few generations ago only a small percentage of people went to school. The family and the church were responsible for transmitting skills and socialization. But the industrial revolution changed all that. Workers, some of whom were very young, were thrown into factories without ever having been trained to accept the discipline of factory life. The family and church declined in influence. There was widespread labor militancy, unionizing, and rioting in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This turmoil was bad for profits, so factory owners looked for ways to train workers and immigrants to be more obedient. One solution they found was mass education.

Horace Mann, a leading 19th century educator, argued that schools could teach respect for private property, reduce crime, and generally make workers accept their lot. The manufacturers saw his point. "Education is the surest safety against internal commotion," said one. Massachusetts established compulsory education in 1851 and the schools have played a major role in socialization ever since.

Of course they were refined over the years. They became bureaucratic and centralized. Aptitude and IQ tests were developed to "scientifically" track students, separating rich from poor, black from white.

Schools Today: The schools haven't changed much, says Peterson. If modern-day schools could force students to take a loyalty oath, it would read something like this: "On my honor, I promise to be On Time for Class, Obedient and Unquestioning, a Real Man or a Little Lady, Heterosexual, Competitive and Racist, and Happy About Having My Constitutional Rights Taken Away." He shows how schools encourage each of the above traits and attitudes and why they are necessary to fit smoothly into the society.

The grass-roots movements to humanize the schools such as Community Control, Student Rights, Alternative Schools, Unions etc., are also discussed.

The last section concerns the future. Peterson

"How high is youth unemployment in your town? How much higher would it be if students were on the labor market instead of falling asleep in class?"

presents a brief outline which mentions broad goals, but he leaves it up to the reader to fill them in.

An annotated bibliography tells readers where they can find more information to use in challenging the power of the schools.

As was mentioned earlier, this handbook has more on history and philosophy of the schools than it has about specific steps to take to change them. But it certainly does not ignore practical considerations. The book is written and illustrated for student organizers. The political analysis is always tied to the practical problem. The book is invaluable because it shows that the schools' problems are not isolated or accidental in most cases and that they can be attacked in a systematic fashion.

Youth advocates and others who work with young people on school-related problems are often buried under a mountain of cases. This handbook can help make sense out of what often appears to be random or senseless repression on the part of the schools. It helps give an overall perspective of the schools which can be a guide in day-to-day work.

WORKSHOP: UNFAIR TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Goals: Familiarize the participants with the history of public education in the United States, and help them see the connections between the past and the present.

Instructions: Read the handbook and the synopsis. The questions here follow the format of the handbook almost exactly. You probably couldn't answer them without first doing the reading and neither could the participants. When giving the presentation you may want to ask some of the questions in a rhetorical manner, and then let the participants suggest various answers. You can fill in where you think necessary.

Notes: This workshop will be most exciting with students, who feel the oppression of schools directly. Your job will be to help them understand **why** the schools are so oppressive. When talking to adults, the approach will be more educational; you will be trying to **persuade** them, based on the evidence and arguments in the handbook, that the schools really are oppressive, and that hurts young people.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Did everyone always go to school? What conditions led to the rise of mass compulsory public schooling? What did the decline of the church and family have to do with the rise of compulsory education? What did the early U.S. capitalists have to say about education? Why? Did some early school people think learning rules of behavior more important than learning subject matter? Why? Is socialization a proper function of compulsory schools?

What is tracking? How did it get started and why did some people think it important to separate students of different races, sexes, and economic background? What methods were used to track students? Which are still used today? Why did educators always strive to make tracking look like it was based on some objective criteria?

What types of political indoctrination do students get in school? Why do history books distort or ignore the history of minorities and working people? What kind and amount of influence did early business leaders have on the schools? Have school boards generally been representative of the people they serve?

What kinds of values do the schools encourage? (Punctuality, obedience, sexism, racism, etc.) Why do they promote these values?

Read pages 25-27 about the distortion of history. Compare it with some history books you have around. Let students do the comparing. Give them a radical history book (some are mentioned in the bibliography) and let them compare it with their own books. Check to see how women are portrayed in history books.

What does it mean to say that schools "absorb surplus labor." How high is youth unemployment in your area? How much higher would it be if students were on the labor market instead of falling asleep in school?

What kinds of reforms and changes have occurred in schools in the last decade (behavior modification, open classrooms, alternative schools, drugging of students, career education, etc.)? How have they affected the purposes of the schools? Have the movements for student rights, teacher unionization, alternative schools, etc. fundamentally changed the schools?

Who controls the schools? What groups? Does control rest with the school board, the textbook publishers, the foundations who fund new research, the students, the parents? Who? Who benefits from the undemocratic structure of schools — teachers, students, or business?

Do you think the schools meet the needs of the black community? Do they help to eliminate racism? Do they meet the needs of female students who have rejected traditional sex roles? Do they meet the needs of teachers? Do they meet the needs of Ford motor company?

Who should have a vote in school decisions? Students? Teachers? Administrators only? The school board only? Should students be allowed on school boards? Should the democratically-elected student council have more power than the appointed administration? Should the schools be run on a totalitarian

model?

If you could run the schools any way you wanted, what changes would you make? Who would be threatened by those changes? Can the schools be radically changed without also radically changing the society they prepare people for?

HIGH SCHOOL WOMEN'S LIBERATION

HANDBOOK SYNOPSIS

High School Women's Liberation is a collection of articles and reviews directed at young women. Many of the articles were written by women still in high school or recently graduated. It is one of the best sources available on this subject, and anyone who reads it carefully should get a good understanding of how sexism affects younger women.

There are three types of information presented in the booklet: 1) factual information — statistics, laws, references to source material and the like — which show that young women do indeed face a tremendous amount of institutionalized sexism; 2) information that can't be quantified, about attitudes, culture, and personal feelings; 3) political information and analysis about the ways young women are kept powerless, tactics for change, and ideas about the kind of society that could be created if people committed themselves to ending sexism, ageism, and other forms of oppression.

Factual information can be found in articles which cover such topics as sexism in school sports and textbooks, the health care and legal system, and popular music. Most of the authors show that sexism exists and is harmful and then discuss alternatives to the current situation. They provide valuable information and new perspectives that can help young women or adults working with young women to break down sexist stereotypes and define new roles.

Every article in the booklet gives some indication of the authors' feelings, but some are especially good at examining sexist attitudes and how they affect young women. "Questions Every High School Woman Should Ask" has 38 questions which young women can ask themselves which point out how pervasive sexism is even from an early age. The questions are an excellent starting point from which group facilitators can get young women talking about their oppression. An article on consciouness-raising gives hints for starting a young women's liberation group. "Growing Up Gay" talks about the special oppression faced by young lesbians. One article, written by a black women, compares the oppression of racism and sexism and concludes that black women must work diligently at fighting both. "Growing Up Sexist" describes what sexist socializations can do to boys and how it can be struggled against. "Singin' the Sexist Blues" shows that the lyrics to many popular songs perpetuate a negative image of womanhood.

Reading these articles will help people empathize with the problems young women face. Young women intuitively know that sexism exists and that it has a powerful affect on them. A skilled presenter can get them to recognize their oppression on a **conscious** level, and then to understand that there is nothing wrong with them for wanting to be different — rather there is something wrong with a society that prevents them from doing so.

The articles that talk about political implications and solutions to the problems of sexism and ageism include "High School Women: Oppression and Liberation," "Girls Play Government," and the "Conclusion." The authors of these articles challenge the reader to begin thinking about alternatives to the present system and how they can be made a reality.

Several books are reviewed at the end of the booklet and there is also a short list of books and records for further information.

High School Women's Liberation is an excellent resource for young women and for adults who work with young women. It had factual information which convincingly shows that sexism is a major problem: it has personal accounts which help young women gain confidence in themselves and their feelings, and can help adults understand the problems associated with being young and female; and it provides an overview of the entire problem and gives suggestions for fighting it.

WORKSHOP: HIGH SCHOOL WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Goals: To increase the participants' awareness of sexism and how it affects young women.

Instructions: Read the booklet and the synopsis. Read through the questions and answer them yourself. If you feel you can empathize with the problems of high school women, you are ready to plan a workshop. Decide which areas you want to cover, based on the kind of group you are talking to, the length of time you have, and any other considerations that are relevant. Pick the chapters that you want to discuss and, if necessary, prepare supplemental materials (xerox copies, records, etc.).

Group Size: This workshop may be given to mixed or sex-segregated groups. All female groups are most desirable, but aren't often available. When talking to mixed groups it is important that the females not be put on the defensive. It is better to err on the side of criticizing the males too strongly than to be too feeble in your support of the women in the group. It is most important to let the women define the problem and to let the men comment, rather than vice versa. Naturally if you're speaking to an all male group the article on male sexism should be stressed. The workshop can be extremely flexible, ranging from a person-to-person talk about a specific problem discussed in one article to a large group discussion or speech, covering many of the issues raised by the booklet.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Xerox "Questions Every High School Woman Should Ask" (page 9) and pass them out for discus-

sion. Xerox or place on an opaque projector, the cartoons that appear on pages 8, 10, 11, 41, 42, 55, 60, 72, 73, 74, 75 and use them when discussing pertinent topics. (Don't copy **all** of them and pass them out, choose what you want to talk about and then pick an appropriate cartoon.)

How many ways can you think of that women are oppressed or discriminated against in school? Are women seen as intellectually inferior to men? Do girls sometimes play dumb? Why? Can a smart girl be popular? What does popularity depend upon for girls? How is it different for boys? (Clothes, intellect, athletic ability, conformity vs. uniqueness, docility vs. wildness, etc.) Are certain classes generally taken by men and certain ones by women?

What roles do women have to play in "the dating game?" Can women be sexual aggressors? Should they call men for dates? What is more important, a boyfriend or a **friend**? What are the results of women competing with each other for men?

Who has the last word at home? Father? Parents? Should children have an equal voice? Who does the housework? Do parents have different expectations for girls than for boys? Do they expect daughters to be virgins, get married and have kids, while letting sons run loose? Do they expect the boys to rake the leaves every fall — and the girls to clean the kitchen every week? Should all housework be shared equally between males and females, parents and children? Is it good consciousness raising to have the boys do **more** than their share of the housework for a while?

Should high school or junior high women form consciousness-raising groups? Would you encourage them? Is it worth risking popularity and old friends to be one's self, to reject sexist stereotypes, to realize that lots of men are full of it? If you're a youth advocate, would you rather counsel an attractive 16-year-old woman looking for a father figure, or a determined 12-year-old wanting information on how to get out of the state? Should young women disrupt their high school homecoming ceremonies and other beauty-type contests? How can you help?

Following are questions relating to specific articles in the booklet.

Sexism in School Sports: Should men's and women's sports be guaranteed the same funding? What do you think about muscular women? Should women be taught self defense as a regular part of gym class? Can men restrain their egos enough to participate in co-ed sports?

The Case of the Missing Sex: Women in High School History Texts: Name 10 women from history, not including movie stars, wives of famous men, etc. Name 10 historical men. Check to see how many references there are to the men and the women in your textbook. Is the Seneca Falls conference covered in your history book? How are other suffragette activities portrayed? How many of the women who **are** mentioned in history books are **not** white, or entertainers, or wives of famous men, or representatives of a traditional feminine value? Read the historical quotes in the article for an idea how women were ignored. If you think women just didn't do much in history, get to a library or a bookstore and read up!

Consciousness Raising: Advocates should understand how "CR" works, what its benefits are, and how to set up a group. Whenever there are three or more young women together, encourage and help them to form a group. The article has several suggestions for topics to cover.

Growing Up Gay: What do you think about women who are not attracted to men? Is that alternative superior to the destructive, sexist relationships that many women are involved in with men? Is lesbianism healthy, or do you think it is something to be cured? How can young lesbians be supported and made to feel good about being gay? How would you counsel a young woman who no longer wants to live at home because she was open about her lesbianism and her parents were freaked out?

Black Women: What kinds of oppression do black women face because of racism? How does sexism add to that oppression? Should black women "support their man" or should they struggle alongside them against racism, but in opposition to them when they are sexist? How is the oppression of black women different from that of white women? How is it the same? How do white women oppress black women (maids, etc.)?

Growing Up Sexist: Name 10 ways men have power over women (physical strength, more earning power, sexual aggressors, head of the family, double standard, etc.). Name some examples of early sex-role stereotyping. Do men take personal relationships as seriously as women do? What myths do you believe about men (unemotional, more rational, better athletes, they shouldn't cry, etc.)? How do men talk about women in "the locker room?" Why do they degrade women like that? Xerox or project the cartoon about sexist sayings. Ask yourself or the audience what other degrading sayings they have heard about women. What effect do you think is created by that mentality? Do men have different opinions about those sayings than women?

The Myth of Sexual Delinquency: Should it be a crime for young women to have sex? Why are young women more likely to be charged with a sex offense than boys?

Singing the Sexist Blues: Read some of the lyrics in the article and try to think of more that are sexist that you know. Why is rock music sexist? Do young people pay attention to the lyrics of popular songs? If so, what effect do sexist lyrics have on young women and men? Bring in some records and analyze the lyrics. Get some of the records (or read the lyrics) by groups that reject traditional sex roles and talk about the messages they convey.

Conclusion: What are some ways the family functions to socialize young women (or mothers, or children in general)? How do the schools work to socialize young people? What forces in the society act to make the schools and family repressive? How is the situation of young women similar to that of the elderly, black people, and women? What kinds of changes need to be made so that young women, and young men, can grow up in a non-oppressive society?

"As a youth worker, would you rather counsel an attractive 16-year-old female looking for a father figure, or a determined 12-year-old wanting information on how to get out of state?"

GROWING UP GAY

HANDBOOK SYNOPSIS

Young gay people don't exist. That's what a lot of people would have you believe. Despite the statistics that say 10% of the American people consider themselves to be homosexual, most people pretend homosexuality doesn't exist. That makes it very difficult to be young and gay. Imagine. You're 14 or 15 years old and you feel more attracted to members of your own sex. But since gayness has always been invisible to you or only described as weird or strange or sick, you repress your feelings. You have to convince yourself that your sexuality is wrong, or doesn't exist at all. **Growing Up Gay** was published to help break down the isolation felt by gay young people.

It has 20 articles about the experience of being young and gay. The authors talk about how it felt to "come out," to tell themselves, their friends and their parents that they were gay and that there was nothing wrong with it. Most of the articles are written by high school students, half by women and half by men.

Coming out is stressed because it is probably the most important event in a young gay person's life. Straight people can only begin to imagine the anguish, the self-doubt and the hatred that people feel when they first realize they might be gay. To go through that process alone is torture. But where can one turn? Most hotlines, runaway houses, and youth centers are inadequately prepared to deal with the problem. If a young gay person confides her feelings in a friend, more often than not the person will tell her it's only a stage in development or will try to talk her out of it altogether. Reading **Growing Up Gay** can't substitute for talking to a sympathetic person, but it's the next best thing. The authors write about their experience and every young gay person can identify with it.

There are several articles besides those specifically about coming out. "What Can You Do If You're 14 and Gay" talks about the problems of meeting other gay people. The bars and baths are closed to people under 18, and there isn't much else. "George Washington Goes Gay" is about students who did something to fight against prejudice and oppression: they formed a gay group at their high school and presented a set of demands to the school administration.

There are also several articles about the family. Two of them talk about the "heterosexist" expectations of parents — dates, marriage, grandchildren — and how they can be dealt with. Another has a list of suggestions for "breaking the news" to parents. There is also an article by parents about their feelings when they discovered their son was gay.

This booklet is only a brief introduction to the literature of gay liberation. There are numerous books, magazines and other materials available to counselors, though little is directly relevant to young people. We've included an annotated bibliography of many items: some with ordering information.

Young gay people do exist and it is the responsibility of everyone who works with young people to be aware of and sensitive to that fact. Youth workers should be prepared to counsel young gay people about their sexuality in a positive way. This booklet can help enormously.

WORKSHOP: GROWING UP GAY

Goals: Advocates and social workers should gain an understanding of the problems faced by gay young people.

Gay presenters could use the booklet as an aid in preparing workshops for the public. Everyone should develop ideas about how they could counsel a gay young person.

Instructions: Read the booklet and the synopsis. Try to answer the questions honestly. Talk about your feelings. Do further research if you feel it is necessary. It is probably not a good idea for non-gay people to use these materials for presenting workshops to the public. However, people who are in counseling or advocacy should talk among themselves about gayness and try to better understand it. If possible, gay people should be present during those discussions to aid in direction and combat unconscious prejudices.

Introduction: The following questions are not related directly to the booklet. They are more concerned with general attitudes towards gayness and young people. After reading the booklet and perhaps a few other resources, a sensitive person should have no trouble handling the questions and should be able to lead discussions in which the participants honestly explore their own feelings about homosexuality.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What stereotypes do you have about gay people? (Are lesbians tough and faggots effeminate? Do dykes want to be men? etc.) Do you know which friends of yours are gay? (You can be sure that some are.) If not, why do you think they won't confide in you about their sexuality? Various sex surveys (Kinsey) have found that approximately 10% of the U.S. population

"Imagine as many special problems as you can that young gay people must face every day. How would you counsel young gays to help them cope with those problems?"

considers itself homosexual, and Kinsey found that 37% of teenagers engaged in homosexuality. Since young people's home problems are heightened when they have sexual conflicts with their parents, it is not unreasonable to guess that 20-30% of the young people counseled at runaway centers are gay. How many of the people you had contact with in the last year brought up their sexuality as one of the reasons for problems at home?

Have you ever been attracted to someone of your own sex? How did you feel about it and how did you resolve it? If you repressed the sexual aspect of that attraction do you think you lost something? Do you think bisexuality is superior to heterosexuality? The American Psychiatric Association says gayness is not a sickness. What do you think? Is homosexuality something to be cured?

What pressures are put on young gay people to conform to "heterosexist" stereotypes? What kinds of expectations do parents have that are impossible or unlikely for gay children to fulfill? (Marriage, grandchildren, dating, social acceptance, etc.) Imagine as many problems as you can that young people would have because they are gay. Some suggestions — guilt feelings, paranoia about being caught, never being able to show affection in public, outcasts from the high school scene, embarrassing questions from parents, difficulty meeting other young gay people, self-doubt, "hands off" attitude from older gays who could be charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor, difficulty fitting into traditional sex-role stereotypes, no one to talk to, etc. How would you help young gays to deal with those problems?

What do the schools teach about homosexuality? What does the Bible say? Your religion? Look at magazines and television. What kind of stereotypes do they portray for gay people? Are gay people ever presented as normal, or must there always be something "queer" about them? Is a positive conception of gayness ever supported in the mass media?

Do you think gayness in most young people is just a stage which they'll grow out of? Do you think gay people see all members of their sex as sex objects? Would you feel funny in a locker room shower knowing the person next to you was gay?

Do you think gay people should be employed as counselors for young people? If you were a counselor or advocate, how would you help a group of gay students form a support group? What kinds of demands could you imagine such a group presenting to the school administration? Make up a list of gay students' rights.

Name 10 historical figures who were gay. If you can't, maybe you should go to the library and do some research. You might be surprised. Look in the resources to the booklet, especially under books and anthologies. **Amazon Odyssey** and **The Gay Liberation Book** are both excellent.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE LAW

HANDBOOK SYNOPSIS

The United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights were written nearly 200 years ago, yet it has only been within the past dozen years that some of the rights they supposedly guarantee to **all** have been held to apply to young people. Even now the few rights granted to young people by the courts have been interpreted so restrictively that the same constitutional 'right' is applied differently for young people and adults. Despite the Supreme Court's fine sounding rhetoric in the **Tinker** decision (excerpted in **Young People and the Law**), minors still are not really "people" under law.

Since a basic criticism of the legal situation of young people has already been presented elsewhere in this book, we will just reprint the contents of **Young People and the Law**. Each of the topics mentioned in the legal rights section of the book you are now holding is covered in-depth in **Young People and the Law**, though generally from a strictly legal approach, rather than from a political or critical standpoint as was done in this book. Briefly, **Young People and the Law** is a complete and succinct introduction to the rights young people do (and don't) have. It is clearly and carefully written and can be used profitably by both youth workers and their clients.

The following topics are each covered in one chapter of **Young People and the Law:** The Right to Free Expression, The Right to Privacy, The Right to Protection Against Illegal Search and Seizure, Involuntary Servitude, Cruel and Unusual Punishment, The Right to Equal Protection Under the Law, The Right to Due Process, and Legal Remedies. In addition there is an appendix in which **Tinker v. Des Moines** and **in re Gault** are reprinted. There is also a short glossary of legal terms.

WORKSHOP: YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE LAW

Goals: The presenter first needs to establish that young people are discriminated against in the legal system. The handbook is designed so that by simply reading through it the basic differences in application of the law to minors and adults is readily apparent. The handbook is organized such that it makes an excellent outline for a speech.

Instructions: Read the handbook (possibly several

"Since the philosophy of the juvenile court says that young people are sent there to be helped, wouldn't it make sense to give them more rights than adults, rather than fewer?"

times) and make special note of the **specific** differences between the rights of young people and those of adults. (For example, young people's right to freedom of speech is more restricted than that of adults, especially in schools.) Also note the different terminology used in juvenile court proceedings and adult courts. Be sure to read the Appendix. Quotes from the court decisions can be used effectively in workshops.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

General: Why are young people discriminated against in the legal system? Do the differences between adults and minors warrant such discrimination? Since the philosophy of the juvenile court is that young people are there to be **helped**, would it perhaps make more sense to give them more rights than adults rather than fewer? If young people had equal rights with adults, how would the problem of exploitation be handled (contracts, etc.)? What benefits would there be to society in allowing full political rights to young people (voting, running for office, etc.)? What problems? How could they be solved?

The Right to Free Expression: How does **Tinker v. Des Moines** expand young people's right to free speech? What limits did it set? Should young people have to suffer more severe constraints on their speech than do adults? What rights do young people have to freedom of association, freedom of assembly and freedom of the press? How are their rights different from those enjoyed by adults? Do school officials have the right to censor student publications (official or unofficial)? Do young people have freedom of religion or do parents have freedom to impose their religion on their minor children?

The Right to Privacy: What rights do minors have to contraception information and devices? Do young people have the right to abortion without their parents' consent? Explain that the right to abortion is especially significant because it establishes the young person's right against her **parents**. Generally the courts have only been willing to take power over children away from the **state**, not parents. Do young people have the right to consent to other kinds of medical treatment without their parents' approval? Is this fair? Rational? What problems may young people face if they have sexual relations with adults? How do pornography laws discriminate against young people?

What is the Buckley Amendment and how does it affect the records schools keep on students? Why aren't the students themselves allowed to see their records?

Illegal Search and Seizure: May police or school officials search a student's desk or locker without her consent? May they search a student's body against her will? Why are principals allowed to search lockers? What justification do school officials need to conduct a legal search?

Involuntary Servitude: Involuntary servitude is outlawed by the constitution, yet parents can force their children to work for them (in a family business) for no money. Is that involuntary servitude? Young people are required by law to be in a certain place at a certain time for a certain number of hours each day. If they don't go there they can be picked up by the police. Is this place (school) forcing some young people to serve time against their will? Is that involuntary servitude?

Cruel and Unusual Punishment: The Supreme Court has held that the Eighth Amendment protects prisoners from corporal punishment, yet they have ruled that corporal punishment is legal if inflicted on students by school officials. Is that fair? Should every person have the right to be free of violence to their person, no matter what their age?

Equal Protection: What is equal protection? Have court cases outlawing segregated schools brought about equal protection for black students? Are tracking systems another form of "separate but equal?" Why is bi-lingual education necessary in many school districts? Examine local suspension statistics. Are black or other minority students suspended more often than whites? Discrimination against female students has been declared illegal. How does it persist? Are boys' and girls' athletic budgets the same in your schools? Are half the people taking auto shop female? Half those taking home economics male? Are pregnant students quietly forced out of school?

Young people are denied equal protection in a wide variety of areas. They aren't allowed to vote, purchase alcohol and cigarettes, attend certain movies, etc. What is the justification for such laws? Did people once feel women shouldn't be exposed to many of the same things? Was that fair? Should young people be prohibited to work? If a young person wants to live on her own, should she at least be entitled to the same unemployment and welfare benefits that adults receive?

Due Process: Young people's due process rights leave a lot to be desired. Until 1971 they could be kicked out of school with impunity. What did the Supreme Court rule in **Goss v. Lopez** to change that? What rights do young people have now when they are suspended or expelled from school?

Thirty-nine states still allow young people to be committed to mental institutions on their parents' word. How might parents abuse this power? (Drugs, sexuality, etc.)

What are the basic due process rights afforded adults in the criminal justice system? Which ones do children have?

Advocacy Organizations

Each of the following organizations is involved in one or more aspects of youth advocacy. Unfortunately, due to space limitations we are unable to list many other excellent groups and projects. However, the National Youth Work Alliance (below) has available an extensive list of youth-serving organizations across the country.

National Youth Work Alliance, 1346 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (204) 785-0764.

The National Youth Work Alliance (formerly the National Youth Alternatives Project) is dedicated to the development of a variety of alternative social services — especially those that involve young people in all phases of the service organization. The Alliance publishes a regular newsletter (**Youth Alternatives**) which carries extensive information about federal youth policy, including interviews with key policy makers. The newsletter also has helpful lists of new resources, jobs, and conferences in each issue. The Alliance is a major lobbyist for youth programs and funding.

An extensive training program is offered through the Alliance for youth workers on a wide range of topics. Write to the National Youth Work Alliance for a complete list of their publications and services.

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National Commission on Resources for Youth, 36 W. 44th St., New York, NY 10036 (212) 840-1801.

That National Commission on Resources for Youth is one of the few organizations in the country that takes a truly **preventive** approach to youth work. The Commission recognizes that teenagers often have little opportunity to make constructive contributions to their communities, except in organizations where they have little power or responsibility.

The National Commission's purpose is to find and publicize programs that have overcome these problems and enabled young people to participate in productive activities and assume responsibility for their work. The Commission uses a network of volunteers to identify successful programs. Information about outstanding programs is published in **Resources for Youth**, the Commission's newsletter.

The National Commission on Resources for Youth also has a good selection of films and videotapes of young people engaged in successful projects. Write to them for more information on all their programs.

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National Network for Runaway Youth Services, 1705 De Sales St., 8th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 783-1172.

The National Network for Runaway Youth Services helps coordinate information and lobbying around runaway services. It publishes a newsletter, **Network News**, which contains much information regarding federal funding of runaway work. They have several publications available, including a National Directory of Runaway Services. Contact the Network for more information.

Children's Defense Fund, 1520 New Hampshire Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 483-1470.

The Children's Defense Fund provides excellent documentation on the status of children in the United States. Knowledge of their research is essential for all youth workers and child advocates. Children's Defense Fund books and handbooks are fine examples of what can be accomplished by combining scholarship and activism. Among the publications available are: **Children Out of School in America**; **School Suspensions: Are They Helping Children?**; **Children in Adult Jails**; **Your School Records**; and **It's Time to Stand Up for Your Children**. Write to the Children's Defense Fund for prices.

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Children's Rights Report, American Civil Liberties Union Juvenile Rights Project, 22 E. 40th St., New York, NY 10016.

The **Children's Rights Report** is the best continuing source of information about the legal problems of young people in the United States. In addition to simply reporting legal developments, the **Report** always discusses the historical reasons for current legal thought, and often recommends far-reaching changes based on carefully thought-out arguments. The **Report** keeps one on top of legal developments and challenges readers to broaden their conception of children's rights.

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C/O Journal of Alternative Human Services, 1172 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92110.

C/O is a quarterly journal which discusses a wide range of issues involved in providing alternative human services. Its writers raise many important questions and often offer examples of innovative solutions to old problems. Regular reading of C/O is an excellent way to keep up with the issues, problems, and questions raised by providing alternative service, as well as to learn about new resources and successful projects.

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National Youth Worker Education Project, Center for Youth Development, University of Minnesota, 325 Hacker Hall, 1364 Eckles Ave., St. Paul, MN (612) 376-7624.

A variety of materials and training are available from the National Youth Worker Education Project, including a youth work bibliography, a book of seminar readings in youth work, and an intensive eight-day youth worker education and training seminar. The project emphasizes the role that traditional youth-serving agencies (e.g. Girl Scouts) can play in helping troubled young people adjust to their community and in primary prevention.

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Voice of Youth Advocates and Interracial Books for Children **Bulletin** are both good sources for information about children's rights and children's literature. **Voice of Youth Advocates** (VOYA) is a publication directed primarily to libraries but would be useful to anyone with a strong interest in young adult literature and advocacy. Write to VOYA at 10 Landing Lane, Suite 6M, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 for subscription information.

The Interracial Books for Children **Bulletin** is written for anyone interested in books and young people — whether your interest is advocacy, values in children's books, anti-racist or anti-sexist themes in children's literature, or simply the politics of children's books. The **Bulletin** staff also conducts clinics and workshops, engages in advocacy work, and runs the Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators. Write to the **Council on Interracial Books for Children**, 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023 for subscription rates and information on their activities.

compiled by Keith Hefner

Bibliography

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Children's Rights Movement: Overcoming the Oppression of Young People, ed. by Beatrice and Ronald Gross; Anchor/Doubleday; April, 1977.

This is a large collection containing many of the best articles that have been written on children's liberation. Among the contributors are Paul Goodman, Margaret Mead, John Holt, Richard Farson, Nat Hentoff, Ted Clark, the Children's Defense Fund, Youth Liberation, and many, many other individuals and organizations. There is an annotated bibliography and a list of organizations working around children's rights. The book presents a broad spectrum of issues and opinion on young people's liberation, and is therefore an excellent introduction to the movement.

Escape From Childhood, by John Holt; E.P. Dutton; 1974 — The attitudes, customs, and laws of society have excluded young people from any meaningful participation and locked them into "18 years of subservience and dependency," according to Holt. He gives a brief history of childhood based on Philippe Aries' *Centuries of Childhood*, and shows that some of our concepts of childhood are outmoded. He strongly criticizes the nuclear family for sheltering and isolating young people and thereby insuring their lack of wordly experience and subsequent incompetence. Holt suggests that, generally, young people should have the right to do what any adult may legally do.

Holt is at his best when he criticizes society's "attitudes and customs." He explains that children are seen as objects, upon which adults are free to bestow love and affection as they please — whether the child likes it or not. Adults have created stereotypes and myths about children which allow them to ignore children's real needs. Holt wants that to change so that adults treat children as human beings, not as objects.

The major drawback of this important book is its lack of political perspective. Holt's discussion of *why* children are socialized to be incompetent and servile is muddled or nonexistent. His ideas about children's liberation need to be integrated into an overall analysis of oppression in our society.

Birthrights: A Bill of Rights for Children, by Richard Farson; MacMillan; 1974 — Farson's book is remarkably similar to Holt's except that he concentrates more on the tangible, usually legal, aspects of ageism rather than on its social and psychological aspects. He would like to see society protect young people by expanding their rights rather than enforcing their inferiority and dependence.

Farson makes a logical argument to show why giving equal rights to young people will be beneficial both to them and to society at large. Among the rights he suggests are: The right to work, the right to vote, the right to "justice" by eliminating status offenses, the right to sexual freedom, and the right to responsive design (safe places to play, etc.).

Farson also touches on the relationship between children's and other liberation movements. He says we need a "new kind of revolution" which will deal both with broad problems of society and the unique problems of various oppressed groups within the society.

PSYCHOLOGY AND AGEISM

Children's Liberation, ed. by David Gottleib; Prentice Hall; 1973 — This book has a hodgepodge of articles, reports from the White House Conference on Youth, demographic information about young people, etc. Some of them are good, and some not so good. Peter B. Meyer's "The Exploitation of the American Growing Class" is an interesting analysis of the economic and political causes of children's oppression. Gottleib's "Children as Victims" is also good. By and large, however, the book does not live up to the promise of its title.

Children's Rights: Toward the Liberation of the Child, by Paul Adams, Leila Berg, Nan Berger, Michael Duane, A.S. Neill, Robert Ollendorff, with an introduction by Paul Goodman; Praeger; 1971 — This pioneering book on children's liberation is concerned primarily with psychology and freedom. The authors apply the ideas of Wilhelm Reich to an analysis of how society does and should treat its children. They believe that by denying children the

A PRACTICAL DISCUSSION OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Oppression of Youth, by Ted Clark; Harper/Colophon; 1975 — The oppression of young people stems directly from their relationships with authority figures, but oppression is not a one-sided or simple concept, Clark explains in this outstanding book. Clark is a family therapist and he draws on many years of experience to write a book that manages to combine penetrating insights and eminent practicality.

He writes that, "as a class, young peopl are systematically and totally oppressed." But having said that, Clark neatly avoids falling into the trap of simply writing another 150 pages running adults into the ground for their sins. Rather, he closely examines the *dynamics* of oppression — the interplay that exists between adults and adolescents that allows the system to work day in and day out.

He notes that young people usually position themselves to make the best of a bad situation. They are able to escape responsibility for much of what they do, they exploit the support of concerned adults, and many are able to manipulate their parents, teachers, and other authorities enough to carve out a fairly comfortable niche for themselves.

Clark's close examination of the often destructive relationships between adults and children is not academic. In the background one can always detect the therapist in him, trying to work out immediate solutions under imperfect circumstances. Adults who work with young people in any capacity will find this book tremendously informative as well as practical.

most fundamental human rights, including freedom of speech, freedom of choice, freedom of movement, etc., society perpetuates its own neuroses. They are certain that many of society's problems stem directly from the oppression of children and direct their criticism at society's major socializing institutions, particularly the family and the schools.

They note that the struggle for children's rights is "not only a manifesto for 'liberation of the child' but a blueprint for a healthier, saner, freer society."

LEGAL RIGHTS

The Rights of Students, by Alan H. Levine, et. al.; Avon; 1973, revised, 1977 — Holt and Farson talk about the rights young people *should* have, whereas this book talks about the rights young people supposedly *do* have. It is a clear, comprehensive guide to the rights of public school students. It's written in question and answer format and is "issue oriented" which makes it readable and practical. Areas covered include: freedom of expression, due process, corporal punishment, grades, and school records. The appendix has a short discussion of why student rights are so limited. (Youth Liberation; *Young People and the Law* [see page 58] is a more up-to-date discussion of the same topic).

The Civil Rights of Students, by David Schimmel and Louis Fischer; Harper and Row; 1975 — Despite the fact that the authors seem to feel that young people are not oppressed, and think that those who do feel that way are "shrill," they have produced an excellent book. Each chapter covers a different legal issue such as freedom of the press, freedom of religion and conscience, personal appearance, race and sex discrimination, and due process. They use actual court decisions and opinions to help explain the law, and do a good job of organizing and explaining the issues themselves.

There is a concluding chapter which discusses trends in the law. And several appendices cover important constitutional amendments, the structure of the court system, leading cases and suggestions for classroom use.

THE STUDENT PRESS

Captive Voices, by Jack Nelson; Shocken Books, 1974 — The results of a study by the Commission of Inquiry into High School Journalism of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial form the basis of this book. It covers censorship, minority participation, journalism education, the established media and its relationship to high school media, and has recommendations for improving high school journalism. The Commission found that "censorship" and a "systematic lack of freedom" are deeply embedded in high school journalism, and "overshadow its achievements . . ."

Some other significant findings are: third-world students have difficulty gaining access to school papers, and the managing editors of established media (62%) *support* censorship of the high school press, at least in some instances.

The book is excellent as a source for documentation of the extent of censorship and degeneration in the high school press.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency,

by Anthony Platt; University of Chicago Press; 1969 — The inadequacies of the various state juvenile justice systems have been and will probably continue to be brought before the public. Many good-hearted people will work long and hard to improve the administration of juvenile justice and to make it more humane. Platt points out that the very people who *created* the horrible systems we now are trying to change were also humanitarians and reformers. Implicitly, Platt is saying that good intentions are not enough, that we also need careful analysis of what's wrong.

In this historical look at juvenile justice, he describes the invention of juvenile delinquency, through expanding definitions of crime. Early reformers tried to regulate practically every aspect of young people's behavior, and actually ended up restricting young people's freedom, rather than genuinely protecting them by broadening their rights and legal protections. He shows that the juvenile justice system is built on a rotten foundation, and needs to be completely revamped, not simply reformed.

EDUCATION

Roots of Crisis: Education in the 20th Century, by Clarence Karier, Paul Violas, and Joel Spring; Rand McNally; 1973 — The authors of this short book are historians trying to recreate an accurate historical interpretation of the rise of mass, compulsory education so that we can deal more intelligently with the problems of today. Their essays cover topics like the influence of business values on American schools, the role of Progressive and Liberal reformers, and the historical development of intelligence testing as a means of reinforcing discrimination. This is a revealing and readable book — a good place to start for anyone trying to figure out what's wrong with the schools.

POLITICAL ANALYSIS

"Youthful Labor Surplus in Disaccumulationist Capitalism," by Robert Carson in *Socialist Revolution #9*, May-June, 1972 — Don't let the title scare you off. One of the keys to the oppressed status of young people, especially "older" young people (12-18) is their economic dependence. Young people can't find jobs so they are dependent on adults for food, clothing, and shelter. Carson argues that capitalism invariably creates groups that are "marginal" to the production process. These groups — among whom are women, third-world people, young people, and the aged — are the most subject to unemployment. Carson argues that the problem of youthful employment can only be solved by a socialist society. Whether you agree with him or not, it is important to think about how young people can find meaningful employment, because without that there is little chance for liberation.

"Education and Control," by James Hilborn in *Our Generation*, Vol. 9, No. 3 — In this excellent article the author tries to show why young people are oppressed in American and Canadian society and how other cultures have attempted to remedy that problem. Hilborn points out that the major institution in North American society, the workplace, is hierarchical and authoritarian. Since the purpose of schools and the family is to prepare young people for their future productive roles in society, those institutions must also be totalitarian. Otherwise children would learn to be critical thinkers, and would rock the capitalist boat. In order to subjugate the new generation, the schools and family must isolate young people from the rest of society and prevent them from interacting with and transforming it.

FOR YOUNGER READERS

Nobody's Family Is Going to Change, by Louise Fitzhugh; Dell; 1974 — A better novel about children's liberation couldn't have been written! Louise Fitzhugh (author of *Harriet the Spy*) tells the story of Emma (Emancipation) Sheridan and her brother Willie with skill and sensitivity. The Sheridans are an upper-middle class black family living in New York. Emma wants to be a lawyer when she grows up, and Willie wants to be a dancer. Their father, a lawyer himself, strongly disapproves of those ideas and tries hard to thwart them. With the help of the Children's Army Emma and Willie confront their parents. The issues of sexism, ageism and racism are subtly and skillfully woven into the plot. Good reading for late elementary age through adult.

I am Not a Short Adult: Getting Good at Being a Kid, by Marilyn Burns; Little, Brown & Co., 1977. The idea of childhood as a dependent and prolonged period is brought into question by this book — and in language and a format that many 8-year-olds will enjoy. Legal rights, the family, schools, television, child abuse and economic dependency are all discussed; in short, everything you always wanted to know about being a kid.

The book also contains questionnaires, games and other activities that will help the young reader explore her thoughts and feelings about living in an ageist society. One of the best things about Burns' book is that it allows the reader to follow her own instincts and make her own discoveries instead of telling her how to feel. The underlying message is that childhood is not just a time for getting ready to be an adult. It is enough to just be a kid, which is a pretty far-out thing to be.

DON'T FORGET TO
LOOK OVER THE
YOUTH LIBERATION MATERIALS
ON PAGE 34.

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'THEY LIKE IT THAT WAY'
A Workshop

Goals: To help participants to identify and understand ageist concepts, by showing the parallels between ageism, racism and sexism.

Instructions: The presenter could get the audience to think of all the sayings they can that are put-downs of black people, women, and/or young people. (A common argument used against giving women and blacks civil rights was that they were so "childlike?") List the sayings on a chalk board. Let the participants examine the implications of the sayings as they now apply to women and blacks, and then let them do the same for young people. The presenter may want to get things started by throwing out a few ideas.

Notes: This exercise could be a good warm-up for a discussion of young people's liberation. A group could be given 10 minutes to come up with sayings, and another 15 could be spent analyzing them. Then a short lecture or a more in-depth workshop could be presented.

THE SAYINGS

- You (women) (blacks) (children) are all alike!
- Last hired, first fired.
- They can't handle money.
- They're not oppressed. They **like** it that way. They don't know any other way. We treat 'em real good.
- They'll take advantage of you if you let 'em. Give 'em an inch and they'll take a mile.
- What are they complaining about? I give 'em free meals and a roof over their head.
- They'll vote just like their (masters) (husbands) (parents).
- They're governed by their emotions. They're so irrational, and they're so uninhibited.
- We're not oppressing them. We're doing this in their own best interests.
- Some of my best friends are (black) (children).
- They're irresponsible. They can't be trusted.
- They're cute when they're angry.
- She's really (smart) (mature) (etc.) for a (woman) (black) (child).
- They have no respect for authority.
- They don't know the value of a dollar.
- They won't do any work unless you make 'em.
- Spare the rod and spoil the child.
  A beating for your wife now and then is good for her.
  Regular punishment makes the slave more respectful and gives him a better deportment.